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ANCIENT EMIGRANTS

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ANCIENT EMIGRANTS

A History of the
NORSE SETTLEMENTS
OF SCOTLAND

BY

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University of Oslo



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'If there had been no emigration in the past, there would be no British Empire now. I hope it is not arrogant for us to believe that not only our own country, but the world at large would have been the poorer.'—SIR HERBERT SAMUEL.

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PREFACE

IN publishing the course which I had the pleasure of delivering as the Rhind lectures in Edinburgh last autumn, it might perhaps have been expected that I should have taken the opportunity either to rewrite them or at least to amplify them with the material and part of the preliminary work upon which they have been built up. My decision to publish them mainly in the shape in which they were delivered was due to the fact that they are an introduction rather than a complete work; an introduction to a field of inquiry whose exploration by Norwegian archaeologists has barely begun. Particularly it may be said that the archaeological material is not forthcoming to the extent which it is hoped to reach, when more systematic investigations and excavations of the Norse archaeological remains of Scotland have been carried out.

The intention of the lectures has been to sketch the outlines and indicate some main points of view upon the study of the history of civilization of an important borderland.

The author wishes to thank the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for bestowing upon him the honour of delivering the Rhind Lectures, and especially to thank his friend and colleague J. Graham Callander for his assistance in many ways.

Also I wish to thank the Boards of the two Norwegian funds—'Statens Forskningsfond' and 'Nansenfondet'—which enabled me to undertake a preliminary archaeological expedition to the Shetlands and Orkneys in the summer of 1928, and further to thank my companions in this expedition, Sigurd Grieg, D.Ph.,

Bjørn Hougen, M.A., and Commander Ragnar Moe, for their valuable assistance rendered during our investigation of the isles.

A special expression of gratitude is due to my friend Sir Rolf Thommessen, K.B.E., D.Ph., Oslo, who out of his great interest for our task put at my disposal for the expedition his yacht *Havfruen*.

To J. Garriock, Norwegian Consul in Lerwick, Hugh Marwick, D.Ph., Kirkwall, and many other friends in Shetland and Orkney I am indebted for assistance in one way or another.

The lectures have been translated by Mr. Crane of the British Legation in Oslo, to whose interest in the subject I owe his valuable assistance.

And lastly, I wish to tender my thanks to the delegates of the Clarendon Press and their officers for their interest taken in the publication of my lectures.

A. W. B.

OSLO, *August*, 1929.

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THE OLD VOYAGES FROM NORWAY, ICELAND, GREENLAND

I

THE ORIGIN

THE history of Norway discloses two great periods of emigration. The second of these, the emigration to America which commenced a century ago and has already drained Norway of over 800,000 people, has not yet come to an end. Bearing in mind that the population of Norway in 1825 was about one million and that to-day it stands at about 2·8 millions, it will be understood, even without reference to factors of far greater importance than that of numbers, that this exodus forms a most important phase in modern Norwegian history.

No less important was the older emigration from Norway, which commenced more than 1,100 years ago, and extended over about 200 years. At irregular intervals during this period, large numbers of Norwegian peasants emigrated to Ireland and Man, to the Hebrides, Scotland, the Orkneys and Shetlands, the Faroes and Iceland, to Greenland and North America. In Ireland and Scotland the old Celtic element consistently maintained its numerical superiority over the Norsemen. In the Orkneys and Shetlands the latter gained the ascendancy, and the Faroes and Iceland were both discovered and colonized by them, while Greenland and North America were discovered and settled by the people of Iceland.

The colonizing activities of the Norsemen in olden times, however, were not confined to this great Atlantic sphere. Settlements were also formed in England, France, Spain, and Italy during the period in question; but in these cases the Norsemen came to Romanized

countries, and hence their settlement took on quite another shape and its history reads differently from that of the early Norse colonization of the Atlantic coasts.

The period of history in which this emigration went on is commonly called the Viking age. The expression conjures to the mind a barbaric age of blood and iron, dominated by hordes of northern Vikings who laid waste with fire and sword the whole of northern Europe, an age when the prayers of the churches re-echoed the supplication of the old French Litany 'from the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us!'

This conception of a host of plundering barbarians from the north had its origin in various spheres of the civilization of the times, but the main responsibility for its dissemination rests with Christian missionary activity, for which the contrast between the Christian ideal and barbaric civilization was a factor of great moment in the propagation of the Christian religion. In later times it crystallized into a conventional belief, and in this form has descended to us and is still continually repeated by historians in western Europe.

The root of the matter is the relation between Christianity and civilization. True as it undoubtedly is that, in the dark centuries, Christianity in western Europe stood for a civilizing factor of fundamental importance, yet it is no less true that the northern races of the Viking age possessed a very highly developed form of civilization, based upon an original and well-ordered judicial system and a sound and exceptionally high standard of ethics allied with the heathen religion. It was not civilization they lacked, but the higher form thereof, which, in western Europe, was a part of the Church.

In the history of Norway the reign of the heathen King

Harald the Fair-Haired (870-930) was undoubtedly a golden age. It could express its ethical ideas in the poem 'Hávamál' and its historical outlook in 'Rigsthula', and it could create that monumental description of life and the world known as 'Völuspá'. An age and a culture which could bequeath such universal human treasures to posterity was not barbaric. An age and a culture which could produce an Oseberg ship and a Gokstad ship, and the art of boat-building which these represent, was surely not destitute of civilization. The Norway of the Viking age was a civilized community, based upon a peasant culture which had its roots in the natural conditions of the country.

What Norway lacked was all that can be expressed in the one word 'Latinity'. She possessed no architecture on a grand scale, no great monuments and no extensive literature. The heritage of classical culture, with its fund of reasoning and knowledge, which the Church preserved for western Europe, was foreign to her. Further, she was ignorant of Christian ideas and thought, which Norwegian mentality took several hundred years to absorb. All this she gradually gained from her relations with western Europe.

Against this background it may seem strange that their warlike and predatory habits were such important features of the conduct of the northern Vikings in Europe. In the first place, however, it is easily forgotten that the most acute phase of this warlike spirit, the Viking invasion of England in the tenth century, was an entirely lawful proceeding according to the morality of the ages, even in Christian western Europe itself. The innumerable raids and wars in France and England in the eighth to tenth centuries, between kings and pre-

tenders, vassals and barons, lords and princes, were not one jot more civilized in character than the raids of the northern Vikings who from time to time ravaged France, England, Ireland, and Scotland. It is true that these old civilized countries possessed churches, but it cannot be denied that in the higher strata of society their morals were often quite other than Christian in character.

Secondly, it must be remembered that, as regards the most harrowing accounts of the Viking raids, our information is derived from the annals of the churches, and is coloured by the subsequent religious fanaticism which looked upon the northern races with something of the same spirit of arrogance which modern Christian missions adopt towards alien peoples. By this is not meant that the northern Vikings did not plunder, *herja* as it is called in the old Norwegian, but only that the whole question must be considered in the light of the mentality of the age, which even in western Europe at that time accepted as reasonable the doctrine of 'might is right'.

Finally, the fact must not be lost sight of that the word *barbarian* in effect only means foreigner, one of another race, and that such a person was quite naturally regarded as a morally depraved being deserving only contempt and death.

It is not the martial aspect of Norwegian expansion in the Viking age which will be dealt with here. That, in reality, has been greatly exaggerated, and historical literature has accentuated it out of all proportion. What we propose to do is to present the history of the old Norse emigration to, and settlement in, Scotland and the islands north and west of that country; its



The Oseberg Ship. Built c. 800 A.D. Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo

origin and early development; its meeting with Celtic and western European civilization; and the way in which this found expression and produced consequences in both branches of civilization. Finally, we shall consider the political effect of this emigration on Scotland's struggle for nationality and on the development of Norway's medieval kingdom.

A Norwegian who wishes to give an account of these things is handicapped by the fact that he has not grown up in the districts where the Norwegian-Scottish community originated and developed. On the other hand, it is to be hoped that he can give evidence of some personal experience of the qualities which the old emigrants carried with them across the sea to Scotland.

For some years the author has been engaged in studying the ancient settlements in the western Islands from Scotland to Greenland. It was therefore with gratitude and pleasure that he accepted the invitation with which he was honoured to deliver the Rhind Lectures. Owing to the comprehensive nature of the subject, the contributions he is able to make must necessarily be only of a fragmentary character. Within the scope of the subject, however, it is to be hoped there will be found points which may be of use to a work whose future appears to promise valuable results for Scottish and Norwegian archaeology.

The Norwegian emigration to the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides covered, broadly speaking, two generations, between 780 and 850, when the great period of early settlements to all intents and purposes ended. During the same period an important contingent also crossed to Man and Ireland.

This first wave of emigration from Norway was quickly followed by another to the Faroes and Iceland. This period fell in the reign of King Harald the Fair-Haired, between the years 870 and 930.

Finally there was an important emigration from Iceland to Greenland between 980 and 1020, and from Greenland these arctic pioneers set forth and discovered the coast of North America from Baffins Land to Virginia during the first two decades of the eleventh century.

In politico-historical respects there were two regions which gained a more prominent position than the others. One was the Orkney Islands and their earldom, the most important and most permanent of all the Norwegian earldoms, inasmuch as it still exists in the person of the Marquis of Zetland. The other was Iceland, which became the seat of a remarkable political and cultural activity, probably the most remarkable created by Norwegian elements in olden times. The emigration to Iceland also took place, to some extent, from the western regions, the Hebrides, Caithness, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands. Owing to geographical conditions the route from the Scottish Isles by way of the Faroes to Iceland became of considerable importance. All through the Middle Ages the people of Iceland spoke of the Scotch islands and the Faroes as land to the *west* of the sea, while Norway in their minds was *east* of the sea.

An approximate idea of the importance of this Norwegian emigration can be gathered from the estimates which have been made of the population in olden times. Thus it has been thought that the ratio between Norway and Iceland in the saga period was 4-1, whereas in

our own times it is 28-1! Even if this is a somewhat prejudiced statement, it will serve for the purposes of description. There is reason to believe that the ratio between the Orkneys and Shetlands and Norway was about the same. As is well known, the population of the Orkneys and Shetlands decreased considerably in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the Shetlands from 32,000 in 1861 to about 25,000 in 1928. It is probable that the populations of the Shetlands and Orkneys in the early Middle Ages were not much smaller than they were about the year 1800, about 20,000 to 22,000 inhabitants in each of the groups.

The question which most naturally arises in connexion with these remarkable emigration phenomena is: what can have induced so many Norwegian peasants of several generations to forsake their own country in order to settle upon such inhospitable coasts as those of the Atlantic countries, particularly the Faroes and Iceland? It is not an unimportant question, but its solution must be sought in fundamental characteristics of the social life of Norway itself. Even though it may not offer any real explanation, some knowledge of the history of Norwegian civilization in the seventh and eighth centuries is necessary in order to obtain an idea of the age in which the emigration commenced.

There are no literary sources from which information concerning this can be derived. There is no book on the Orkneys and Shetlands corresponding to the Icelandic 'Landnámabók'. The *Orkneyinga-Saga* makes no mention of the early settlement itself, which it takes for granted is a matter of common knowledge; nor was this the main theme of interest in the saga. The saga of the Orkney men is an earl's saga from beginning to end;

it treats of individual people and their relations with each other in life and death; it has no concern with history or geography.

In his 'Saga of the Kings', Snorre relates that

'during the strife which arose when King Harald the Fair-Haired endeavoured to reduce Norway to one Kingdom under his sway, there was a great flight to the Shetlands, and many great men fled as outlaws from the power of King Harald and sailed as Vikings to the west. During the winter time, they made their abode in the Orkneys or Shetlands, but in the summer months they descended upon Norway and inflicted great damage.'

This description presupposes that the Orkneys and Shetlands had long since been colonized by the Norwegians. It has nothing to do with the history of the colonization itself, and these Viking raiders were no doubt as troublesome to the population of the islands as they were to the inhabitants of Norway.

Our knowledge of such a period as the seventh and eighth centuries in Norway is, practically speaking, founded solely upon archaeological material and the history of western Europe in the same period.

Based upon the natural conditions of the country, the Norwegian civilization had developed in an early Iron Age as a peasant civilization devoted to agricultural pursuits and hunting and trapping, the latter pursuit being more prominent in the west and north of Norway. Grave-finds and archaeological collections enable us to picture conditions as they then existed.

The first serious agricultural reform in Norway took place in the centuries about the birth of Christ, when it gradually became imperative to reorganize the work over large tracts of the country in order to collect winter



As it is now in the Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo



Reconstruction of the ship under sail

THE GOKSTAD SHIP

food during the whole of the summer so as to feed as many animals as possible during the winter. This resulted in an increased exploitation of all kinds of natural fodder-crops, and also in the erection of barns and byres, thus reaching the basis on which farms were gradually established in Norway. In addition to the iron axe, two iron tools were the most important in this industry, the scythe and the *lauvkniven*,¹ which was also called the *sniðill*. To sum up briefly, here we have the main prop of the old peasant farming industry as it developed during the first centuries of our reckoning, and as it remained, on the whole unchanged, down to the eighteenth century. It was, in a high degree, agriculture on an extensive scale, which called for plenty of space for its pastures and innumerable harvestings on mountain and in valley, an industry spread over wide expanses with room only for a few people.

In addition it was a harvesting industry, the fundamental law of which was to reap, to utilize everything nature offered, without the expenditure of too much labour. It was imperative to keep as many domestic animals as possible in order to utilize the pastures, to gather feeding-stuffs, and feed them during the winter, if necessary underfeed them in order to get as much as possible out of them. Forest products were substituted for hay; birch twigs, spruce-leaves, moss, lichen, pine tufts, even horse manure was used, mixed with chaff and given to cows as food. Furrows were turned with spades to a great extent; only in the flat districts and on large farms were ploughs used. The domestic animal was the main source of livelihood, and the cow figures

¹ i.e. an iron knife specially adapted to cutting the leaves of foliferous trees.

largely in the old Norwegian peasant law. The furrow was merely supplemental. The main thing was to reap where they had not sown; the furrow was in reality more the exception than the rule.

In the closest possible connexion with this agricultural activity, an extensive hunting and trapping industry, both on sea and land, was carried on all along the Norwegian coast. The most favourite quarry was perhaps the seal, the grey seal and the fjord seal, since the blubber of these provided all that nourishment which the less developed grain culture failed to yield. The deer also, in many parts of Norway, was an animal of the greatest importance and has indeed remained such even down to our own times. It is the seal and the deer which appear on the rock-carvings of the Bronze and Iron Ages in Norway, and it was these two creatures which played the greatest part in Norwegian peasant industry right down to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Of little less importance were sea-fowl in the coast districts, on account of their eggs, feathers, flesh, and oil. Fishing for domestic purposes has quite naturally always been a feature of the extensive Norwegian coastline, but in reality its significance was not so great until the important fisheries developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The only fishery which at *all* times has been of great importance is the salmon fishery. Finally, to a more limited extent, among the valleys and mountains of the interior reindeer hunting was exceptionally important from the Iron Age right down to the eighteenth century.

All this hunting and trapping, carried on with simple instruments, bow and arrow, until the age of fire-arms arrived, but above all with very primitive means for

operations on a large scale, is in a sense the keynote of the old Norwegian civilization. Each individual peasant in Norway is a born huntsman, a born trapper; and each individual coast peasant in Norway is, in addition, a born sailor and fisherman. This old life of trapping and hunting, so different in the various parts of the country, has its foundations in the great law of order in nature on which all Norwegian hunting enterprise in all ages down to the present day has been nurtured. We need only call to mind the fish which at the same period with only slight variation each year seek the same coasts and banks to spawn, or the salmon which, after years of absence far out at sea, returns to the self-same river in Norway in which it came to life, or the sea bird which year after year on approximately the same day comes back to sit in the same place where its ancestors from time immemorial have stayed for a few short months of the year. Again, we can call to mind the seal which with unfailing regularity, generation after generation, seeks the same rocks on which to breed, the whale which on its journeys for a few days each year visits at a definite time the same bays and sounds which uncounted generations have visited before it, or the deer which year by year during the same weeks swims across the same fjords and sounds which its forefathers have swum on their autumnal treks to the isles of the coast in the west.

The whole of this chapter of the psychological history of livelihood is one of the deepest and most comprehensive known to us. The instincts which awaken annually in the trapper, the huntsman, and the fisherman coincide with the great working periods of the year. It is the same thing which creates rhythm in the farmer's

life, nature awaking to life, the earth which must be ploughed, sowing time, growth and ripening.

This ancient husbandry and hunting and trapping industry together create a working life, the various forms of which are so closely interwoven that we cannot take away one link or attach greater importance to another. It produces a remarkable and distinctive system of labour and civilization, dependent upon natural conditions. It is not husbandry alone, neither is it cattle farming alone, nor yet only trapping and hunting. It is all of these at one and the same time, and it is this which created the old Norwegian mentality of work and the general spirit proceeding therefrom.

The greatest material asset of this old labour culture was the native *jernvinna*, the extraction of iron, in the manner which the peasants had taught themselves, partly from ordinary ores but mostly from the so-called bog ores. Not only did they teach themselves to extract the iron, but they also learnt to fashion all the implements they required for farming purposes. The fact that the extraction of iron became a link in the peasant civilization itself, is proof of a process of development. If this is compared with the primitive self-support of the Stone Age, aided only by raw material, and the imperfect technical skill of the Bronze Age, it will be understood what advances in civilization were opened up by the fact that the peasants themselves learnt to extract the iron from bogs and clay and produce all their implements and weapons themselves. The art is derived from the Romans, and it was two hundred years before it became a universal and permanent feature of Norwegian peasant civilization. In the fifth and sixth centuries it appears to have been fully developed, and



At Meling, Stavanger, representing whale hunting from boats



At Evenhus, Trøndelag, with seal, boats, elk, deer, &c.

ROCK-CARVINGS FROM NORWAY (BRONZE AGE)

attained the highest point of perfection in the seventh and eighth centuries and the Viking age.

No one who has examined the large collection of iron weapons and implements of the seventh to tenth centuries in the archaeological museums of Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondhjem, and Tromsö, gathered together as the result of excavations and in other ways, can fail to have been strongly impressed with this peasant civilization's wealth in iron. It is also easy to discern from the material collected what this native iron production has meant for the growth of civilization in Norway. Incomparably the most important of all these implements is the iron axe. It is to such an extent the main factor in the Norwegian peasants' work that it can be said to have been a part of his spirit for more than a thousand years. The iron axe is the peasant's chief and greatest implement for the clearing of forests and therefore the cultivation of land in Norway. It is his weapon in battle for the conquest of land, and it is an implement in his hands for the increase of culture. In efficiency the iron axe is infinitely superior to the stone axe. It is one of the great forward steps in the history of our civilization. It ushered in a new era in Norwegian peasant civilization.

A further creation of the iron axe was the plank, and with this came the psychology of plank-work. It was this which led to the boat and to the building of houses.

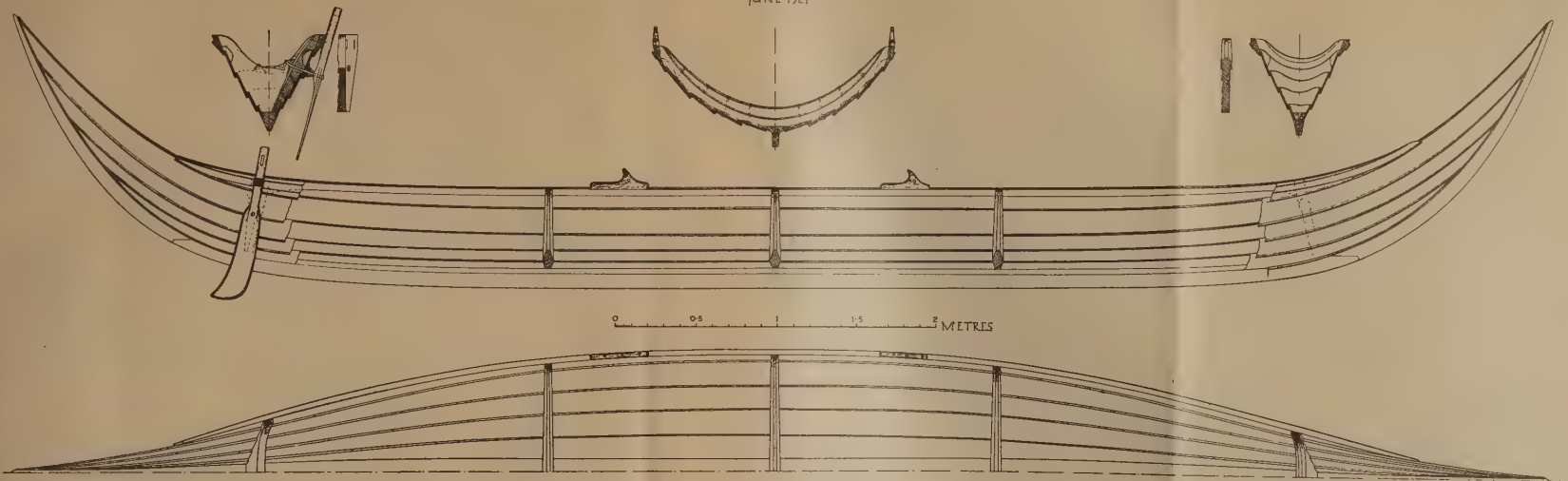
It is not necessary to touch upon the ancient history of the development of the boat, inasmuch as we are able to prove the truth of this statement from archaeology. Owing to discoveries in the moors of the west of Norway in recent years we are now acquainted with

the boat types as they were prior to the Viking age, and as they were created by the rapid development of the Norwegian iron civilization in the fifth to seventh centuries. The most characteristic example hitherto found is the Kvalsund ship from Herøy in Sunmör, which was extracted in 1920 from a marsh where it had been buried in a broken condition. The largest of the ships found there was built of oak planks and was over twenty metres long, three metres wide amidships, broad and low, and without the constructional stays which developed in later shipbuilding. The planking is 'clinched' with iron nails. This remarkable ship, a plan of which by H. Shetelig and Fr. Johannessen is reproduced here, must have been built in the sixth to eighth centuries, and it is not improbable that the first voyages across the North Sea from Norway to Scotland were made in ships similar to this.

Finds of this kind show that in Norway in the seventh and eighth centuries there existed a boat-building craft, which explains the enormous maritime progress made by the Norwegians during the Viking age. Already at the beginning of this period there existed a type such as the Oseberg ship, built about the year 800, and two generations later, in the time of Harald the Fair-Haired, the Gokstad ship, both of which surpass the older ships in all respects. In a similar craft to the Gokstad ship the first Norwegian earls of Orkney crossed the North Sea to the Norwegian king. It was in all respects an excellent ship according to the old requirements, a good sailer and a real sea-going vessel. Its seaworthiness was proved in practice when an exact replica of the Gokstad ship was sailed from Norway to America by a handful of Norwegian sailors in 1893. They took four weeks to

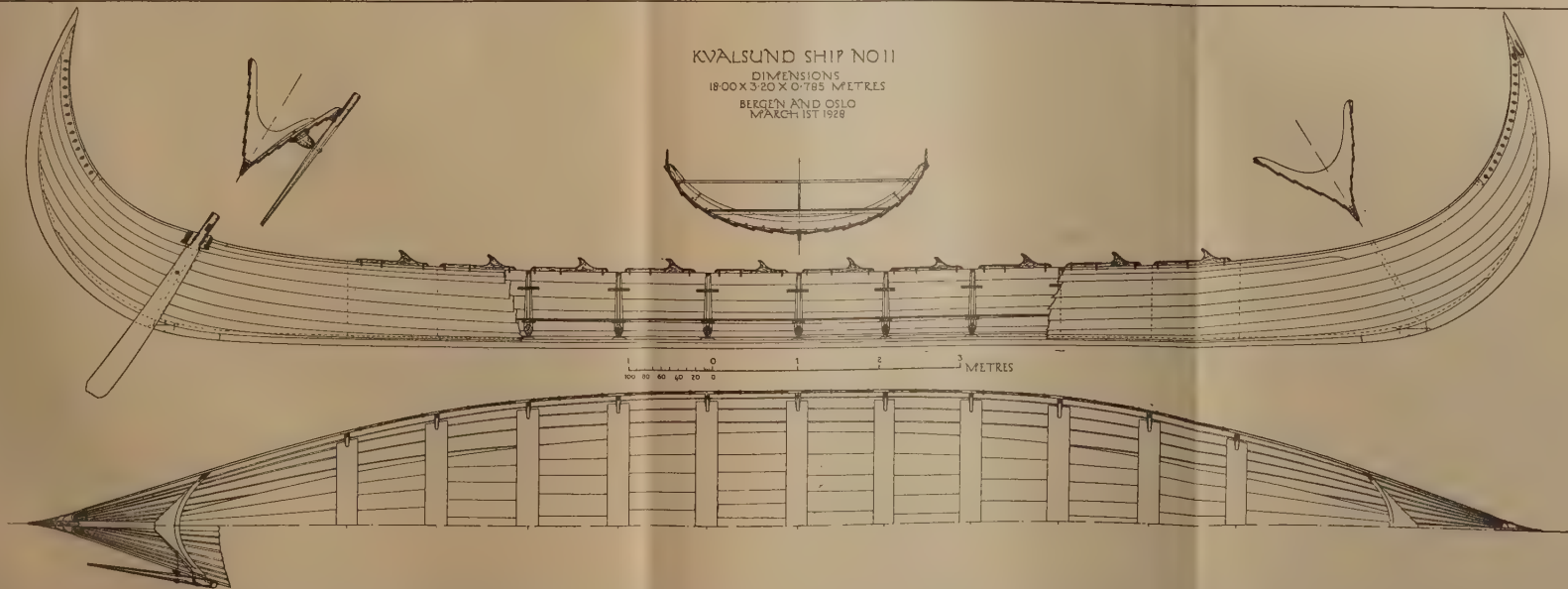
KVALSUND SHIP NO I

BERGEN AND OSLO
JUNE 1927



KVALSUND SHIP NO II

DIMENSIONS
18'00 X 3'20 X 0'785 METRES
BERGEN AND OSLO
MARCH 1928



TWO BOATS FROM KVALSUND, SUNMÖR, PROBABLY DATING FROM VI-VIITH CENTURY

cross the Atlantic, and in bad weather proved the excellence of the ship at sea; light and buoyant, active and made for the sea.

These were the boats which ushered in overseas navigation. In olden times, protected by the skerries, coastal traffic had been carried on, but this was the only form of sea transport until the advent of the Viking age ships. With these began the real maritime activity of the Norwegian, calling for an entirely different development, technical skill, and mentality than that required for journeys along the coast.

The inhabitants of an extended coast-line alternate between an intense exploitation of the sea and a complete neglect of it. This is specially characteristic of periods of inflation and depression in the history of Norway. No such exploitation of the sea was possible, however, until the iron axe had created plank-work and thus made possible the construction of those splendid old ships.

From the short account which is given here it will be realized that the seventh and eighth centuries in Norway were characterized by great advances both on sea and on land, even if the quantities here in question do not bear comparison in terms of absolute wealth or population with present-day conditions and technical standards. In comparison with western Europe, however, it can safely be said that the Norwegian peasant civilization of about the year 800 possessed a more highly developed standard of boat-building, and a richer and much more comprehensive production of iron weapons and implements, than any other contemporary civilized race in the west and north. To illustrate this it is sufficient merely to compare the profuse collection of

iron implements found in the grave of a well-to-do peasant of the eighth or ninth century (axes, knives, arrows, sickles, scythes, scissors, drills, bits, palstaves, ploughshares, flax-combs, and the like) with the poor equipment of iron implements on one of the farms of Charles the Great in the same period. 'Iron was so rare that on one of Charlemagne's domains there were to be found only two axes, two spades, two gimlets, a hatchet, and a plane. A hundredweight of iron was then worth fifty times as much as it fetched at the end of the nineteenth century, and the smith was the most honoured of technicians.'¹

Many factors, some of them impossible to discover, combine to create such an advance, such a wave of improvement in a nation. It is in all probability borne forward by forces not revealed to us. It is hardly necessary to say that it was not the iron axe which created the new Norway of the later Iron Age, not the boat which brought into existence the exodus over the Atlantic; but it is plain that neither could have come about in the absence of these technical improvements.

What was the reason for the emigration to Scotland, the Faroes, and Iceland during such a period of national improvement? It would be more reasonable to suppose that the contrary would have been the case, that emigration ought to be expected in times of depression, as a result of poverty and discontent, and this is undoubtedly the case at all times and in all parts of the world. In the meantime it is of interest to remark that the Norwegian emigration to America in the nineteenth century took place during a period of national pros-

¹ P. Boissonnade, *Life and Work in Medieval Europe*, London, 1927.



Agricultural implements of wood and iron of
the Viking Age, Norway

perity in Norway, which has no equal in our history. The obvious explanation of this seems to be that emigration is a fruit of the influence of the wave of prosperity for good and ill, inasmuch as a period of prosperity need not imply good conditions for every one. In reality the actual causes are very difficult to determine, and owe their origin to coincidences of circumstances both important and simple, which are often at the same time of a conflicting nature. To endeavour to discover them all would be vain. Facts gleaned from the history of economics and labour could at best only illustrate without explaining.

The Norwegian emigration to America in the nineteenth century was due, to some extent, to the great decline in agricultural profits due to the technical revolution in the world's commerce (steamships and railways). Briefly, it very soon proved more expensive to transport a sack of grain from a mountain farm to a town than to import a sack across the Atlantic from America. Farms situated off the highway and far from towns became unprofitable to work, since the work entailed was too great in comparison to what could be attained in America with new land for the same expenditure of labour.

It goes without saying that it is not difficult to point out other and more general causes which owed their origin to the new economic structure of the nineteenth century. The object of the foregoing remarks has merely been to emphasize the fact that what is called a period of prosperity often alters established conditions for the benefit of some and to the detriment of others. Without by any means asserting that herein lies the ultimate solution, we will proceed to examine certain

circumstances of the seventh and eighth centuries which throw light on the Norwegian emigration.

The marked improvement which took place in Norway in the sixth to eighth centuries itself depended on what may be described as increased initiative. The outward expression of this showed itself in a high degree in the Norwegian art of boat-building, which gave access to the sea and played its part in the creation of the nautical life which became the heritage of later generations. Its inward expression lay in the new development of the iron-working industry, which everywhere created such great and such new possibilities. That this was the case is undoubted. The large number of new place-names (especially those ending in *land* and *staðir*) which appeared in the sixth to eighth centuries bears witness to a flourishing period in the history of the country, marked by an enormous extension of agriculture and clearing. This great period seems to have come to an end about the year 800. Four hundred years were to elapse before the advent of a new wave (*ruð*-names); and three or four hundred years more until yet another appeared in the seventeenth century. It almost seems as if occurrences of this kind in Norwegian history repeat themselves every three to four hundred years.

That there must be some connexion is evident from the fact that the great number of names which denoted clearings in Norway in the later Iron Age (*land*, *staðir*, &c.) are the same as those which are to be found in the Orkneys, Shetlands, Faroes, and Iceland.

We shall perhaps never be able to prove that the first result of the great period of prosperity in Norway in the sixth to eighth centuries was over-population, or, more

correctly speaking, that congestion arose in consequence of which the country's own resources could not support the great activity. It looks, however, as if the various factors, the continual increase in all spheres of activity, perhaps first and foremost in that of boat-building, taken altogether, were the expression of something deeper; a buoyancy and spirit of unrest in the very soul of the nation which was increased in a high degree by the extensive form of agriculture of which mention has just been made. The greatest influx appears to have been to the valleys and districts of the eastern part of the country, where uncleared land was still to be found, but the extensive character of agriculture limited the number of settlers, and the land was speedily occupied.

The immediate result of this was that the movement turned towards the west, to new countries across the sea. In this connexion it is of interest to remember that it is typical of periods of prosperity that the merely good is inevitably cast aside in the scramble for the best. Only when depression sets in do we once again turn to that which is less profitable and direct our energies upon the exploitation of every possible chance which arises. In a time of prosperity the hope of gain in new and unknown spheres becomes one of the greatest forces in human nature, irrespective of whether such hope is well grounded.

It must also be borne in mind that the small Norwegian communities in the eighth and ninth centuries were peasant communities, having no towns and no specialized trade, and in consequence there were no great possibilities for an increase in initiative.

Finally, it is important to remember that the old Norwegian system of land-tenure, which was allodial,

must have contributed to the departure from home of younger members of families, and so to emigration. The principle of 'odel', the unassailability and inalienability of the family estate, must often have resulted either in the estate being worked in common by all the members of the family, or in the departure of the younger members to seek new land elsewhere. It is clear that the odel-system has at all times been the cause of both new clearing and emigration, and it is in the nature of the case that there are some periods when such new clearing and emigration are greater than in others.

Finally, the emigration had also another side, the conditions in western Europe. When the Norwegian exodus to America commenced a hundred years ago, one of its causes was the rumour of enormous tracts of cheap land which could be obtained in the New World. Did the Norwegian emigration to western Europe in the eighth century spring from a similar cause?

The popular idea of old Norwegian communities isolated from European civilization is entirely wrong. Our archaeological material from the sixth to eighth centuries proves that the Norwegian races during the whole of that period were in communication with people of the North Sea coasts as far distant as the Channel, and even farther away. There existed a close relationship between the races of the North Sea littoral, and the limitations of nationality with which we are familiar in our own times were then quite unknown.

One result of the examination of the archaeological material at our disposal should be mentioned. The types of weapons in the west Norwegian material of the seventh and eighth centuries show plainly the con-



Viking Age Grave-find from Aamot, Hedmark, Norway (10th cent.),
showing the large quantity of iron objects owned by
a Norwegian at that date

nexion with French types, whereas the east Norwegian specimens of the same period are clearly related to the English.¹ The conclusion to be drawn from this is that Norwegians of the seventh and eighth centuries in their voyages along the southern coasts of the North Sea reached both the French and English channel ports, the eastern English harbours on the North Sea, and the western English on the Irish Sea. The trade which this represented was in reality quite primitive, involving goods of small value (weapons, glass, and ornaments). The real importance of the trade did not lie in these, and it is quite incorrect in speaking of these things to use such expressions as trade, staple markets, and exports, as if the whole were a question of modern ocean transport.

Those Norwegian peasant lads who journeyed to France and England overcame the difficulties of language in the same manner as sailors of our own times in all parts of the world, and the relationship then was, in reality, greater than now. They kept their eyes and ears open as seamen, the pioneers of all geographical knowledge, ever do. They could not avoid hearing of everything which went on and all the tidings which were discussed. The Church missionaries sought them in port, even as they seek them out now, and by this means they came into contact with one of the great movements of the times, the restoration of the land.

The Teutonic invasions of France and England had completely disorganized the old Roman system of agriculture. Without entering into the disputed question

¹ Haakon Shetelig, *Nye jernaldersfunn på Vestlandet* (Recent Iron Age Discoveries in Western Norway), Bergens Museums Årbok, 1916-17.

to what extent the Roman civilization had disappeared, whether its forms of expression in organization and work were wholly destroyed or not, one thing seems certain, the old system of *agriculture* identified with villas and estates had greatly degenerated and was in a neglected and ruinous condition. This is one of the reasons which justify the application of the term 'dark centuries' to the sixth to eighth centuries in England and France.

The monasteries and the civilized ecclesiastics who governed them in the seventh and eighth centuries were the authors of a strong movement for the restoration of agriculture, comparable with the so-called 'back to the land' movement which everywhere finds expression in the numberless organizations preaching an agricultural revival. Newspapers and printed matter were unknown in those days, and the chief method of disseminating propaganda was naturally by word of mouth. In this manner there is no doubt that it also reached Norway.

The colonizing activity of the Church and, above all, of the monastic orders, was highly effective. Bishops frequently became the leaders in agricultural improvements. Western monachism set the cultivation of the soil as an object for the activity of hermits scattered throughout the country-side. The famous Irish Columban (6th to 7th century) grouped his monks into powerful associations, and imposed upon them the rule of unlimited manual labour until they were exhausted. 'Let them go to their repose', he said, 'broken with weariness, and sleep upon their feet.'

'Ireland and England, full of ardent neophytes, strove to sow the lands of the west with their laborious monastic colonies, and rendered a service to civilization

which should never be forgotten' (Boissonnade). Ireland and the western and northern isles of Scotland became peopled with monasteries. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms owed the first great enterprises of clearance and cultivation to their monasteries at Jarrow, Crowland, Glastonbury, &c.

It is in this west European atmosphere that we can discover one of the germs from which the emigration from Norway sprang. Wherever they came, it was in the air that there was land to be had, land to be cultivated; and this was the atmosphere they breathed, those young Norwegian peasants, when their travels brought them to French and English harbours. They heard of beautiful large islands off the Irish and Scotch coasts, where land was easily obtainable. It became clear to their minds, and aroused their imagination, that there was land to be cultivated in Scotland, England, Ireland, and France, and that it would be profitable to go and take possession of it. Directly or indirectly, it was the Irish missionaries who told of the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides, and the power of geographical orientation which these Norwegian mariners possessed in so high a degree speedily enabled them to determine whither to sail in search of the lands of which they had heard so much.

Here again there is much similarity between the old exodus and the modern emigration to America in its early stages. The first Norwegian expeditions to America were made with sailing ships which the emigrants owned and fitted out in common, and they owed their origin to all manner of stories, told at second and third hand, about the good conditions in the new country. The old sailing ships which crossed to America

were neither better sailors nor more comfortable vessels than the Gokstad ships, if anything they were poorer. They were just as dependent on a favourable wind as were the old Viking ships, and for this reason the question of wind conditions in the North Sea is of interest in understanding the relationship between Norway and the new districts in the west.

A square-rigged vessel cannot lie very close to the wind, much less were the old ships able to do this, because being so shallow and without ballast they would make leeway at every attempt to sail close-hauled. To make the Scottish islands from Norway, therefore, required easterly winds, and in the opposite direction westerly. Now, as all sailors well know, the prevailing winds in the North Sea blow from the west; only in the Spring do they blow from the east, that is to say, during the season when snow and ice in the mountain regions of West Norway exert a lower temperature than that of the air in the North Sea. These easterly winds generally prevail during March and April, and can often hold through May and June. According to a survey in respect of the City of Edinburgh for a period of 100 years,¹ it appears that, whereas the percentage of easterly winds during the whole year was only 34 per cent., it was for April 47 per cent., May 52 per cent., and June 42 per cent. Mohn, the Norwegian meteorologist, has also, by means of comprehensive tables, calculated favourable winds for the North Sea voyages from the Norwegian starting-points to the Shetlands, Orkneys, and north of Scotland, and arrived at similar results.²

¹ W. R. Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland*, 1926, p. 19.

² H. Mohn, *Vindene i Nordsjøen og Vikingetogene*, Oslo, 1914.

Knowing, as we do, the difficulty which even our modern, ballasted, and solidly built sailing craft without auxiliary power experience in an effort to cross a wide stretch of sea with an adverse wind, it is clear that the old craft were still less able to accomplish the feat. It naturally follows that the North Sea expeditions were seasonal voyages, more especially the voyage from Norway to the Shetlands, which was usually made in the spring. In the opposite direction it was nearly always possible to reckon on a favourable wind. It was also easier to sail in the spring and the late summer, because the stars shone more clearly than at midsummer. The compass was then unknown, and probably did not come into use before the thirteenth century.

It was not long before the North Sea voyagers obtained their fixed routes and identification marks which, with the old art of navigation, were more real and more identified with an inborn experience and knowledge of the sea than is the more rigid technique of our own times with its charts, log, compass, and telegraphic weather reports. We have a reminder of the most generally used point of departure from Norway in the name of *Hjeltefjorden*, the wide fjord off Bergen between Herdla and Askøy. From this point the old emigrants had, in the majority of cases, the most favourable crossing to the Shetlands, and in addition the shortest route across the North Sea between Norway and the Scottish islands.

Such were the conditions for the first emigrants. Ship after ship set forth, often several in company. With them the emigrants had on board not only wives and children and servants, but cattle and gear and what movables they possessed. They turned their

backs upon their ancestral homes in Norway in order to found new homes in other lands. Such was the beginning of the emigration to, and the early settlements in, the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides.

There remains, in conclusion, one question. Why did not the Norwegian emigrants journey more to the south, to warmer countries and better conditions? Why did they content themselves with the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides, and why, at a later date, did they seek even harder conditions in the Faroes and Iceland?

The answer to this is easily found. Some of the emigrants of olden times actually did make their homes in southern lands, become freeholders both in England and France. In those cases, however, they came under other forms of law in countries where they lost their racial identity and disappeared swamped in an alien race. As a matter of fact only a very small percentage chose this course. The choice of northerly regions by the majority was due to fundamental and primitive causes. It was the craving for surroundings where something of the old was to be found in their new activities. They asked for sea and fjord, mountain and hill, the fowling cliffs and sealing grounds. They needed the pastures, meadows, and heather, to which they had been accustomed in the land of their birth, and the light summer nights which brooded softly over farm and field at home in Norway. No sentimental spirit of homesickness lay at the back of all this, but the simple fact that the whole of their mentality, fostered by the toil of countless generations before them, was adjusted to a life in which all these things were to be found. All else would be in the nature of transplanting, obliteration,

and sacrifice. It would deprive them of the powers which were their inheritance and their greatest asset.

It might be asked whether what they met and found abroad was so much better than that they had left behind in Norway; but that would be an idle question. The emigration once begun, not even the bitterest disappointment of those who joined could stay it. In this respect the modern emigration to America has countless examples to offer; and the story of the old emigration also contains that element of hazard and adventure which makes it so human and so real, like the fragment of an ancient chronicle recording the invincible optimism of mankind.

II

NORSEMEN AND CELTS

'Dispecta est Thule'

THE regions round about the northern and western coasts of Scotland, to which the Norsemen came, were both known and peopled long before the Norsemen set foot there. For several thousand years, people of the Celtic races had lived in Scotland and the northern islands. Their geographical horizon was shaped by their origin and their natural connexions with the south, with the continent in the neighbourhood of Belgium and France, and with Ireland, Wales, and England. What we now know of their place-names contains an abundance of detail, but it lacks the broad geographical outlook which undoubtedly existed, but which the later history of the colonization has blotted out.

The Romans also, whom Tacitus in his life of Agricola extols for their conquest of the whole of Scotland and the Orkneys, left no useful geographical orientation of the district as a whole.

With the Norse colonization there followed not only new names, but an entirely new geographical horizon and a new orientation created, so to speak, from the decks of the Viking ships from which the Norsemen beheld the land they were to people. Instead of the place they occupied in classical geography as a fringe of the world, the Orkneys became to the Norse settlers the centre of a kingdom from whence they looked out upon, and named, all else.

It is the Orkney-Norse geography which is preserved over the whole of the northern territories of the North Sea and which to-day is current in the

languages of Europe. The names which now apply to the important districts originate from an Orkney horizon in the early Middle Ages. Not only has it preserved to us the old historical Pictland, but it left us the names we still use to-day, Scotland, Ireland, and England. From the Orkneys the Norsemen named the Hebrides,¹ which they called the Southern Isles (Sudreyar), and from Caithness they saw the Scottish mainland loom and called it Sudland, the southern land, a name which still exists (Sutherland). The Sudreys, on the other hand, have regained in a corrupted form their old Celtic name Hebrides. The old Norse name is still to be found, however, in the title of the Bishop of Sodor and Man, where Sodor is the survival of the latinized name *Sodorensis* for Sudreyar. These names preserve the characteristics of an ancient seamanship combined with a real faculty for geographical orientation. They show us the North Sea races advancing towards the west, and taking over from the Celts the work of civilization in those northern regions.

Among the first and most natural questions which arise, then, are: what did they meet with? what were the conditions they found there as distinct from those of Norway? what steps did they take to find new settling grounds?

The summer days in the North Sea, in the majority of cases, are days of good weather, as compared with the stormy autumn and spring. Exceptions can always be found, but these we need not take into consideration. With a favourable wind the old ships sailed at least as fast as a modern steam-boat of moderate speed. Two days

¹ The Greek *Eboudai* was latinized by Pliny to *Hebudes* and thence corrupted to its present form *Hebrides*.

and nights at sea, and the low hills of the Shetlands rise above the horizon. The author made this trip last summer in a small Norwegian sailing yacht. We sailed from Skudesnes at 4 o'clock one Wednesday afternoon and at 7 o'clock on the Friday morning we sighted Noss Head, off Bressay in the Shetlands. At 11 o'clock on the same morning we anchored in the north harbour at Lerwick. Our voyage broke no record, but it may perhaps be reckoned as a favourable one, better than the average of the old voyages. In handbooks and old and new narratives of travel there are to be found excellent descriptions of the Shetlands, the Orkneys, and Scotland, and I do not consider myself able to improve on these. I will only endeavour to give some idea of what we saw when we sailed the same way as the emigrants of 1,100 years ago, of the impressions we received during the weeks we spent in the Shetlands, the Orkneys, and Scotland. During these short weeks the contrasts and similarities with Norway were borne sharply in upon us, not least perhaps because we came fresh from the same coasts in Norway as the old emigrants, but also because conditions to-day in the Scottish islands are, on the whole, the same as those which prevailed in the days of olden time.

A curtain of haze enveloped the land of Shetland when we first saw it with its ridges, heaths, and low mountains. A low-lying land, compared with Norway, but to our eyes it conveyed an impression of height owing to the filmy atmosphere which magnified all things. How strange to a Norwegian was the approach to this land; no skerries, no broom-buoys and stakes, none of the sunken rocks and beacons so familiar in Norwegian waters. Straight in from the sea, round

Bard Head and up the fjord of Lerwick, one, in a manner of speaking, bursts upon Shetland. Shetland: there was something characteristic about it, from the first moment we saw it, something peculiarly its own: it was Shetland: not Norway, not Scotland, but Shetland.

Hjaltland for some inexplicable reason the old Norsemen called it. The philological meaning of the name is plain enough, but its real meaning is difficult to understand. The present form came into use quite early and is to be found spelt Shetland in an old Norwegian record of the year 1289.¹ In these islands of the Atlantic I passed some weeks in fair weather and foul. The mild damp atmosphere, the gray tones and veil of mist which day after day enveloped the long even lines of ridges, never more than 100 to 150 metres in height, combined to deceive the eye and distort all things visible, while the absence of shadows made it impossible to judge distances. There were other days, however, when the north-west wind blew fresh and clear from the Arctic, and the landscape stood revealed, bare of woods and mountains, with bluish tints on the farthest ridges and deep blue water in the lochs in which the islands so plentifully abound.

On every side the sea presses in, both the Atlantic and the North Sea. There are long fjords and bays—*voes* and *gjos*—strong in their resemblance to the fjords of western Norway, but without the precipitous walls of the latter; for the heights of Shetland are softly rounded and without a single bold feature. The highest peak in the Shetlands, Ronas Hill, is only 500 metres high, and rises in a series of long and gentle sweeps out

¹ J. Jakobsen, *Shetlandsøenes stedsnavne. Årbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed*, Kjøbenhavn, 1901, p. 175.



'Drengs' in St. Magnus Bay. Mainland, Shetland



Rooing Sheep. Shetland

of the sea, its deep red rock breaking the natural carpet of peat and grass.

Both in the Shetlands and the Orkneys, however, one also meets with long stretches of steep, black, rugged sea cliffs, often flanked by *calves* and *drengs*, silent witnesses to the fury with which the Atlantic in storm tears and worries the coasts of this land.

When we ask ourselves during a trip through Shetland, what attracted them to this land, those young Norse peasants from Agder, Rogaland, and Møre who 1,100 years ago settled in Shetland, the picture that is revealed to us of the country to-day will furnish us with a partial answer. Many of the Shetland farms, with their long strips of cultivated soil, surrounded by large expanses of pasture, might at harvest time appear richer than the small confined farms of the Norwegian 'Sörland'. At Sumburgh near Jarlshof one sunny day I saw long lines of silky brown barley billowing in the wind, but at other places the work and mode of life appeared to be even more primitive than at home in Norway.

After all, this land of Shetland is on the outskirts of European cultivation. There is no wheat and no maize, none of the vines and gardens of the south. The grain which is cultivated, barley and oats, is not Shetland's strong point; potatoes and green stuffs are far more important, although even these were not grown in the islands two hundred years ago. The real key-note to the life of the Shetland Islanders and their civilization is the pasture land, covered with luscious grass and stretching for mile after mile over the treeless plains and between the countless hills of peat and rock. Wherever one goes there are sheep, moving splashes of grey on the landscape, interspersed with cows, and

flocks of small black shaggy-haired ponies, which year in and year out revel in the abundant grass.

It is, indeed, more than half a pastoral life even to-day.

Seamen and fishermen the people of the Shetlands have always been. The large fishery, however, belongs to more modern times. Lerwick, one of Scotland's largest fishing towns, rose to importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the same manner as the west Norwegian towns of Aalesund, Kristiansund, Molde, Bodö, and others, and is the result of Dutch, Scotch, and Hamburg enterprise.

One more point, defining conclusively the whole of the ancient geographical culture, can be illustrated by a modern example. In a Shetland almanac the 14th of March 1881 is marked as a red-letter day. On that day there was established with State support a more frequent system of communication between the Shetlands and Scotland, two mail vessels a week in the winter and three in the summer between Aberdeen and Lerwick. It is difficult to understand what this means by merely studying a chart, but there is to be found in an old description of the Shetlands an anecdote which illustrates it.

The revolution in England which took place in November 1688 did not become known in the Shetlands until May 1689. In that month a Scottish skipper came to Lerwick, and hearing in church the clergyman pray for 'the guid King Jamie', he afterwards remarked that the parson must be a very remarkable man to pray for a king who had been deposed six months previously, whereupon the skipper was arrested for *lèse majesté*.¹

Up to the nineteenth century Shetland, in common with the Faroes and Iceland, was a closed country

¹ Robert Cowie, *Shetland*, Aberdeen, 1879, p. 55.

during the winter, and such it had been from the time of the earliest settlement. Nothing illustrates better than this the fact that Shetland has always been Shetland and nothing else; a collection of islands out in the Atlantic Ocean, cut off from everything, self-contained, but colonized wholly and completely by emigrants from Norway many, many years ago, a race which as early as the second and third generation became natives of Shetland with a more natural relation to Norway than to any other country both by reason of descent, wind conditions in the North Sea, and origin.

Only from actual experience comes realization of the great dissimilarity between the Shetlands and the Orkneys. To pass from the hilly broken country of the Shetlands with its sheep and ponies, pastures and brown heaths to the broad cultivated lands of the Orkney Islands is almost as great a change for a Norwegian as the contrast between the north of Norway and the rich flat countryside of its eastern interior.

The fundamental difference between the Shetlands and Orkneys is not generally recognized. They differ in geographical construction, in conditions, and in mode of life. It is not realized that they are so little interdependent, because, in reality, each of them forms a separate isolated unit.

A Scotch minister once summed up the difference in the words 'A Shetlander is a fisherman who owns a farm, whereas an Orkneyman is a farmer who owns a boat'.

Islands like Shapinsay, Stronsay, Sanday, and South Ronaldsay have more than 70 per cent. of their area under cultivation,¹ while on Mainland it is possible to

¹ J. G. Moodie Heddle and T. Mainland, *Orkney and Shetland*. Cambridge County Geographies, 1920, p. 3.

walk for hours at a time over mile after mile of cultivated country. Such places as Papa Westray, Sanday, or Deerness on Mainland might be mistaken for a piece of Denmark set down in the Atlantic Ocean, with this difference only, that the Orkneys must content themselves with the green oats and the brown barley, whereas the plains of Denmark billow with golden wheat.

Exposed to the fury of two seas, the Shetlands and Orkneys are weatherbeaten lands and their storms are terrifying experiences. That this is so there is little reason to doubt when one sees the small, lowbuilt houses of stone which cling so tightly to Mother Earth, and the haystacks which are bound so firmly to the ground to prevent them blowing away.

The low-lying Orkneys cluster together in a group which ends in the south-west with the high rocks of Hoy (the 'high isle', 500 metres). Even when the day is none too clear the coast of Scotland can be seen across the broad, and often dangerous, Pentland Firth, which is bounded on the north by the precipitous sides of Hoy and on the south by the red rocks of Dunnet Island, the ancient Raudabjorg, which sparkle in the sunlight and in gloomy weather enliven their surroundings.

In the east are the lowlands of Caithness, the Denmark of north Scotland, with its fine large farms built over an old red sandstone plain which geologically is nearly related to the Orkneys, but because it lies on the mainland is an even more favourable and richer district than the Orkneys. With Caithness terminates the natural limit of the Norwegian sphere. In the east, bordered by the North Sea, it runs further down as far as Dornoch Firth and Moray Firth, which the ancient settlers called Breidafjord, and in the west with the high mountains



Stone circle at Brodgar, Mainland, Orkney



Maeshowe, Orkney

broken by the dales which lead down into Sutherland, where the landscape reminds the Norwegian of the counties of Agder and Rogaland in his own country.

Beyond lies the great district of west Scotland with its coastline from Cape Wrath to the Clyde, a distance equal to that from Sognefjord to Mandal, indented by numerous fjords both great and small, the ends of which form the beginnings of narrow glens stretching from north-east to south-west. In many parts of this district both in fjord and river there is excellent salmon fishing. Inland are the Scottish highlands with their peaks rising, as in Ross and Inverness, to a height of 1,500 metres.

Finally, out of the sea to the west rise the Hebrides, both the inner and outer—Long Island—a barrier against the Atlantic. Rainy islands are these, differing from each other in many ways, some falling precipitously into the sea, nothing but naked rock, others low, without trees and with poor soil, continually swept by the wet winds of the Atlantic Ocean. It has been said that these islands require a sturdy lover of nature to appreciate their charms, and yet it was these western isles which in older times were most thickly populated, both by Celts and Norsemen.

The cultivation which to-day is carried on in this great district from the Shetlands to the Hebrides is the fruit of the labour of 1,100 years, but it is nothing more than what was done at the time of the settlement.

In only two things was there any noteworthy difference between that which the emigrants left and that to which they came, but this difference was very great and of vital importance. It is certain both the Shetlands and the Orkneys, as well as Caithness, were just as treeless

as they are at the present day. It is symbolical that the well-known Orkney Earl Einar (9th century) became famous in history simply because he taught the people how to make fuel of peat, an accomplishment he probably learnt in the then woodless tracts of Möre in Norway. This lack of fuel, however, was in reality the least hardship the old pioneers were called upon to suffer. We must try to realize what it meant for the whole of the community, hemmed in on all sides by the sea which was their only means of communication with the outer world, to be without sufficient timber to build even the smallest boat. This state of dependence became the islands' heel of Achilles. As in Iceland so it was here: that which in olden times they called *Skiplöysa*, the lack of ships, destroyed their vital nerve.

To manage without timber for building purposes was easier. The want created the native stone architecture which has existed in the islands from the very first. In this also, however, the natural conditions are plainly reflected. The only available stone is slaty and obtainable only in small blocks suitable for houses of small size and for stone walls. A glance at such walls in the Shetlands or Orkneys tells us immediately that here are a people who from time immemorial have been wont to handle stone. Anything more solid, more spontaneous than a Shetland or Orkney stone farmhouse with all its buildings and walls, trim, firm, and solidly built, it would be difficult to find.

There is, further, an historical element of importance, namely, the fact that in olden times Scotland was well endowed with forest land. This applied not only to the Highlands, where the famous old Tor Wood covered a vast district between Callander and Lochaber, but

also to west Scotland where the fjords and lakes were fringed with woods well on into the Middle Ages. In addition, all the evidence points to the existence of a considerable growth of timber on many of the Hebrides, such as Skye, even in later historical times. As late as 1718 Taylor relates that he 'visited the district of Braemar and noted as many fir trees growing there as would serve for masts from this time to the end of the world, for all the ships, carracks, hoyes, galleys, boats, drumiers, barkers, and watercraft that are now or can be in the world'.¹

There can be no doubt that this Scotch wealth of timber was an important object of trade and barter to the north. It is certain that considerable export of timber took place from the Sudreys to the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Iceland. The importance of this became even more marked by the political changes of 1266.

Finally, in one other way the conditions in the isles north of Scotland differed greatly from those of Norway. There was an absence of everything in the nature of forest animals and big game. The Scottish islands were at the time of the Norse immigration not inhabited by the deer, stag, bear, wolf, lynx, or fox. All big game hunting and its resultant mode of life the Norwegian settlers were obliged to renounce. A new outlook was presented to them, an adjustment became necessary, and a different mentality resulted. Further, everything to which they had been accustomed in Norway in the shape of the gathering of winter food for animals automatically disappeared, owing to the natural pastures and the mild weather which permitted grazing for the greater part of the year.

¹ Kermack, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

In order properly to appreciate the history of the Norse colonization, it is necessary to be familiar with the older foundation, the Celtic settlement on the islands. There is, in the meantime, a fundamental circumstance which must first receive consideration, the chief characteristics of the *climatic* history of the northern islands and Scotland. It is well known that in the peat bogs of Scotland, the Shetlands, and the Orkneys great trunks and roots of trees are often found, proving that large forests once existed in these places. Further, that not only in peat bogs but in older strata there have been discovered the bones of large forest animals, deer, stags, wolves, bears, and many others. It is plain enough that these date from the ancient pre-Norse period in north Scotland, both the Celtic and the pre-Celtic, identical with what Scotch and English students call the forest period. The main point in this connexion is that the type of weather prevalent at that time in Scotland and the islands north thereof was totally different to that which prevails at the present day.

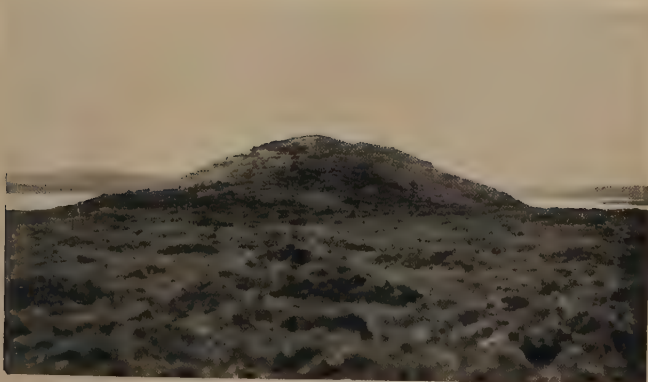
‘Depressions attracted them to the northernmost tracks so that the British Isles especially came more persistently under the influence of anticyclonic conditions. The rainfall diminished, the surface of the bogs dried sufficiently to enable forests to grow. During this phase of climate the winters may have been severe, but the summers must have been much warmer than the present.’¹

These circumstances prevailed, though in a less acute degree, over the whole of northern and western Europe and possibly over an even greater district. It is quite certain, however, that in no other place did this phase of climate or its change play such a vitally important

¹ C. E. P. Brooks, *The Evolution of Climate*, London, 1925.



Standing stone on the road between
Scalloway and Tingwall, Shetland



Large tumulus at Brodgar, Orkney

part as in the most northerly and westerly region of Scotland and the adjacent islands.

We still know far too little of the reasons for the change from this peaceful type of weather, without storms and rain, which in the main belongs to the Stone, Bronze, and Early Iron Ages, but we are familiar with its effects. The ever recurring cyclone centres which constantly pass from the Atlantic over Ireland, the Shetlands, and the Faroes, and which have such an important bearing upon the climatic conditions of western and northern Europe, destroyed in their time the forests and animal world of all the islands and western coasts. Another phase of life was introduced in the districts where their greatest havoc was wrought, the summers became chilly and damp, the winters mild but rainy, and without snow. It would be very incorrect to advance these facts as the sole explanation of the progress of the history of civilization, but it goes without saying that they were not unimportant in such Atlantic districts as those from Ireland to the Shetlands.

In speaking of the period at which this important change took place great caution is necessary, but perhaps we may go so far as to say that it seems to have culminated about the beginning of our era. It will later on become apparent that we must take it into consideration in connexion with the history of the civilization in the district.

This brings us to the main question of this investigation, the relation of the Norse colonization to the Celtic. The kernel of this is whether or not the Norsemen found a Celtic population on the islands, and in the north of Scotland, a population which they drove away, stamped out, or rid themselves of in some way or other.



The sources of information available for the solution of this problem are partly archaeological, partly linguistic. Some assistance is also obtainable from literary sources apart from the latter, but too much reliance must not be placed on these. It is in the nature of the case that the following account is limited to the main points which are of importance to our conclusions.

The number and variety of monuments from the pre-Norse period scattered over all the islands north and west of Scotland and on the Scottish mainland itself are so great that this alone bears witness to a considerable population in ancient times.

There are cairns, most probably dating from very early times, widely differing in form and dimensions, with and without chambers, which presumably belong to the Stone Age and which, to some extent, correspond to the Bronze Age of more southerly countries. In many places they are supplemented by earth mounds which were thrown up at the same period. They are apparently characterized in all parts of the country by the same high situation, look-out stations, and mounds.

Of their connexion with the people who raised the great standing stones, stone circles, &c., cromlechs, and so on we know very little. In the Shetlands they are comparatively rare, but the Orkneys possess some of the most imposing examples to be found anywhere, such as the stone circle at Stennes with the beautiful centre table, and some distance away that enormous circle known as Brodgarringen, which was originally composed of thirty-four standing stones of great height. Their equal is only to be found in Stonehenge and the stone avenues of Brittany, and they must surely belong to the same period as these—a period of megalithic

civilization which, however, may quite as easily date back to what we call the Bronze Age.

If one takes one's stand at Stennes on a summer's day and looks out across the wide stretches of glorious landscape, one cannot fail to notice that these stone monuments are associated with certain unique mounds such as Maeshow to the north-east of Stennes, and a wonderful mound situated quite close to the Brodgar circle in the vicinity of Loch of Stennes. The splendid arched vault of Maeshow would appear to prove that these earth mounds date from the Stone Age.

Whoever the people may have been who left such imposing memorials behind them, one thing is plain, that these buildings have been erected under favourable conditions.

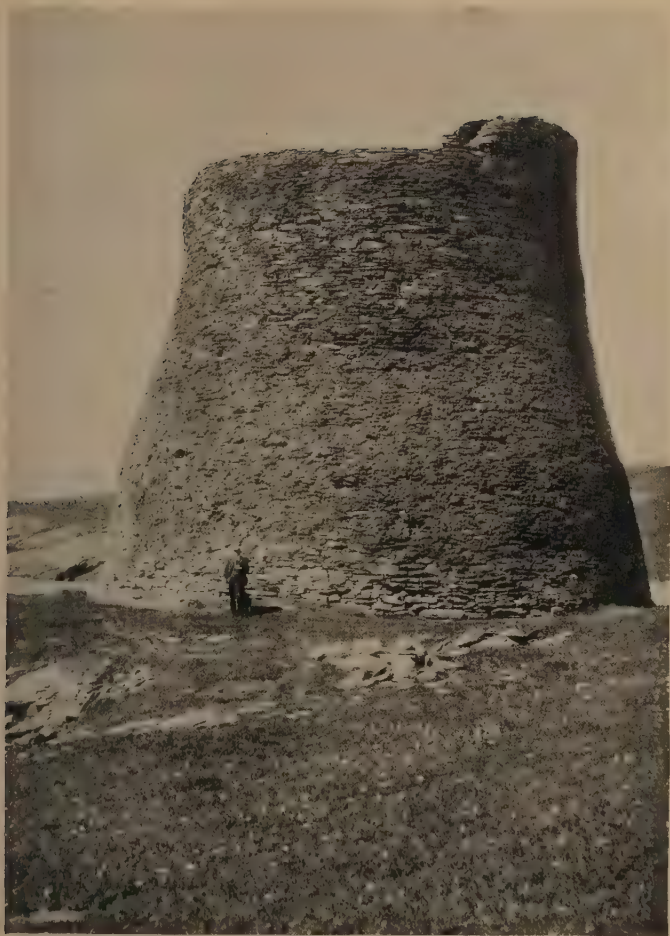
More recent than these are two other groups of monuments, consisting partly of the picts-houses and partly of the brochs, to the latter of which we will devote special consideration. As far as the remarkable subterranean buildings called picts-houses are concerned, mention must not be omitted of the obvious constructional likeness of their galleries and rectangular chambers to those of the brochs. This cannot be accidental, and it would seem not unnatural if the picts-houses and the brochs both owed their origin to the same people and the same standard of civilization. In the picts-house excavated and examined last summer at Skaill, Orkney, by Professor V. Gordon Childe, there were found, among many other things, considerable remains of stags, which prove that these houses were still in use during the forest period.

The Scotch name of broch, which is now customarily applied to the old stone towers, is a corrupt form of the

old Norse word for them of *borg*. It is interesting and valuable evidence of the fact that among the things which created the greatest impression upon the minds of the Norse emigrants were these towers of stone. To the historian and archaeologist of to-day they are also one of the main links with olden times in these regions.

Of the hundreds which at one time existed, not many now remain which are not in ruins.¹ Unique, therefore, is such a well-preserved and obviously complete tower as the Mousa Broch in the Shetlands. No one who has once seen this tower and entered its dark interior can forget the impression created by this mighty pile. It is not by any means the largest of the towers, but it is instructive because of its perfect preservation. Its grey mass of stonework rises up from the shore of the little island of Mousa on the eastern side of the Shetlands. It is 15 metres in height, circular in ground plan, and built of flat, slaty grey stones, without mortar. The mere fact that this tower remains unimpaired after hundreds and hundreds of years, proves that it is the product of real technical skill in building, the more so since within its round, smooth walls there are a variety of arched rooms, stairways, and ledges. I willingly confess that it was with a feeling of apprehension that I entered these rooms and mounted the stairways, dank, dark, and cold as they were. Even the open room imparted an unpleasant and melancholy impression, in spite of the light from above. The magnificent view from the wall over the whole of Mainland down to Sumburgh Head was worth all the feeling of discomfort I endured.

¹ A. O. Curle, 'The development and antiquity of the Scottish Brochs', *Antiquity*, 1927. See also The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland, especially Caithness, Sutherland, The Outer Hebrides.



The Broch of Mousa, Shetland

The few brochs which it has been possible to measure in our times are nearly all built upon the same plan, that of a small defensive tower, but in two cases there is evidence of a more developed style of fortification, with outer works of the same grey stone as the tower, and ditches and earthworks of a very involved character. The best illustrations of this are the Clickemin tower near Lerwick and the Lingrow tower in the Orkneys. It has been contended that these outer works must be of later date, but the excavations at Jarlshof (Sumburgh, Shetland) have opened up the possibility and probability that these walls are original.

Altogether, these brochs are relics of a remarkable civilization. They are the expression of a high standard of technique with primitive means, in a military epoch which knew no other long-range weapons than the bow and arrow, stone missiles, and the like. They are solid, well-balanced architectural works, equipped to withstand even the most powerful blows of the stone missiles of olden times. Finally, it must be emphasized that they imply the use of considerable man-power, great numbers of slaves who dragged the stones to the spot, shaped them and, under a technical director, carried out the building operations.

To estimate the significance of these buildings it is necessary to know their dates, how popular they were, and the type of civilization they represented.

Although Sir Francis Tress Barry devoted time and energy to the investigation of no less than twenty-four brochs in Caithness, it must be admitted that the results were meagre. Yet his excavations and those of others have gradually narrowed down the period to which the brochs can be said to belong. The majority of objects

discovered belong to the Imperial Roman era. Experts seem, therefore, to agree that the brochs must have been erected in the centuries about the birth of Christ. Many things found in them seem to indicate that they were used through the ages by Norsemen among others, of which, as is well known, there is literary evidence.¹

Of the remains which have been found in them there are a number which are capable of giving some explanation of the mode of life of the people who inhabited them. There are, for example, millstones of Roman type, long-handled combs, also of Roman types, which were used for weaving, there are fragments of Terra-sigillata cups and vessels, lamps of stone, spinning-whorls, knives, and so on. Further there are bones of cattle and sheep, and of stags, deer, and bears. The last mentioned show that we can still reckon with a forest period on the islands during the first two centuries after Christ. Finally, impressions of grain, oats, and barley, have also been found.

From these finds it can be inferred that the livelihood of the broch people was farming—agriculture and cattle-farming, combined with hunting of forest animals.

It is only upon the question of the purpose of the brochs that opinions become diametrically opposed. On the one hand it is contended that their situation and the finds which have been made in them 'mark them out as the dwellings of families rather than of the heads or chiefs of larger social organizations' (Curle), and, further, that they are eminently and peculiarly structures of defence and not of aggression. On the other

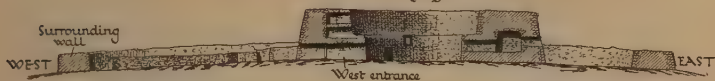
¹ The possibility that the brochs had some connexion with the Sardinian *nuraghi* has justifiably been dismissed by A. O. Curle, *op. cit.*

THE BROCH OF CLICKEMIN
NEAR LERWICK, SHETLAND
Surveyed by Captain Ragnar Moe, Shetland Expedition 1918

SECTION FROM SOUTH TO NORTH
A-B



SECTION FROM WEST TO EAST
C-D



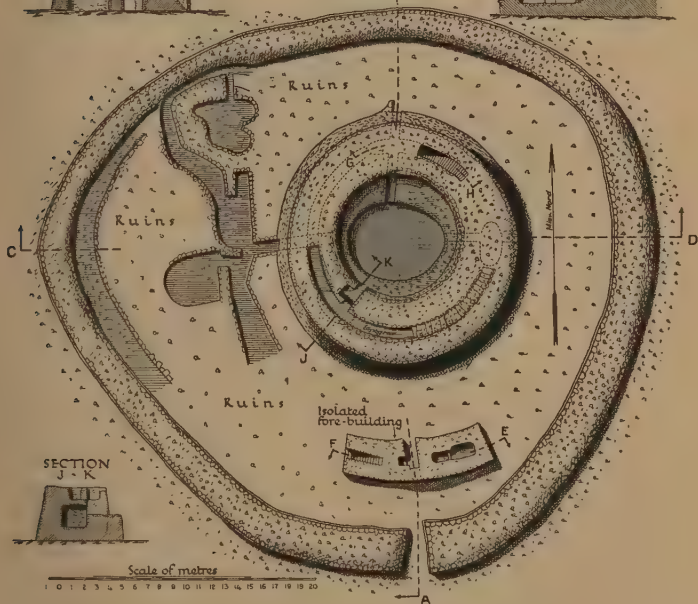
SECTION E-F
through the fore-building



SECTION G-H
through the North entrance

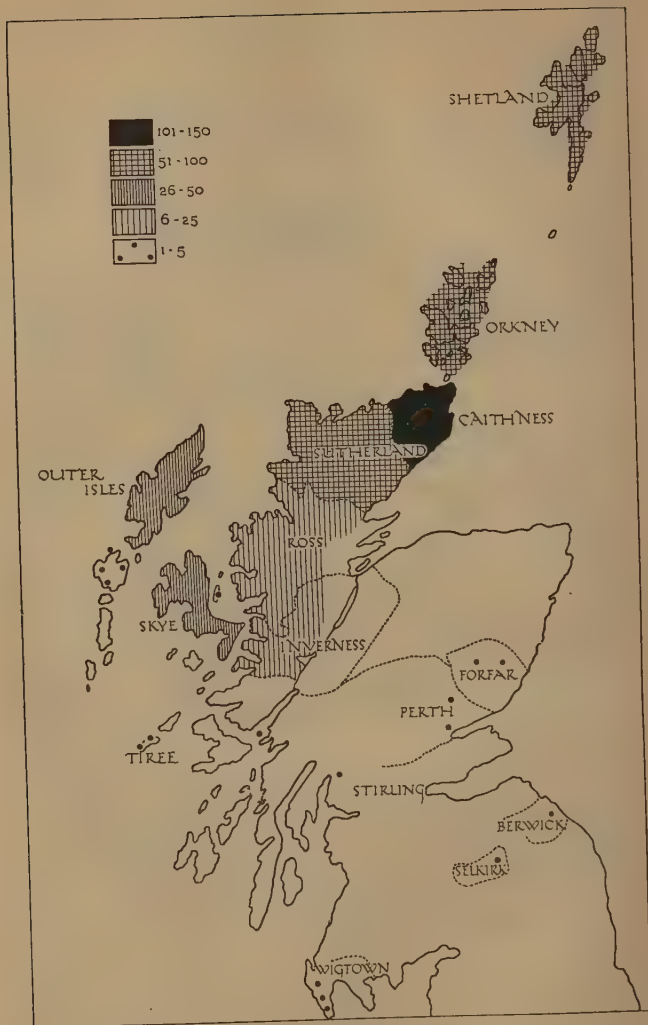


GROUND PLAN OF
THE BROCH



SECTION
J-K





THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BROCHS OF SCOTLAND

hand it is claimed that the brochs are 'pirate holds of the races which from the islands and North Scotland roved as pirates further to the south' (Watson).

This sharp division of opinion is not merely on the surface. If the brochs were only defensive works, purely and simply intended for habitation during invasions, this implies a disturbed state of affairs and a continual fear of attack from people further to the south. If, however, they were pirate holds, the opposite must have been the case, in other words a population which lived partly by piracy and which therefore must take into account the possibility of counter-attack, and for this reason had need of such strongholds. In any case the brochs were not ordinary habitations but defensive works. That this was so is also evident from their situation on nesses and promontories, necks and projections, on the sea and lochs, often also on desolate islets such as Papa Isle of Papa Westray and Isle of Huip near Stronsay in the Orkneys.

There is one circumstance which is conclusive for the interpretation of the brochs. As will appear from the following table, and even more so from the map, their distribution was very far from uniform.

The Shetlands	.	.	.	.	75
The Orkneys ¹	.	.	.	.	94
Caithness	.	.	.	.	145
Sutherland	.	.	.	.	70
The Hebrides	.	.	.	.	80
Rest of Scotland	.	.	.	.	27
Total					491 ²

¹ James Cursiter, 'The Orkney Brochs', *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. i, p. 49 (1922-3).

² Special emphasis is laid on the fact that the table is a very superficial register as regards the districts where the Ancient Commission

Practically speaking we can thus say that the brochs were limited to the Shetlands, the Orkneys, Caithness, Sutherland, and the Sudreys. The very few which are situated outside of this district are mostly to be found in Ross and Inverness on the west coast.

We cannot fail to remark that this is exactly the same district which was the scene of the Norse settlement, and it might be suggested that the brochs were not unconnected with that event, but this has been rejected for good reasons by J. Anderson. There is, however, an important and illuminating parallel between the two phenomena which can scarcely be accidental.

If the brochs were purely and simply the defensive works of a peaceful agricultural race they must reflect the disquiet of a period of invasion, an ever present and common fear of conquest, which could only spring from the greatest and most determined attempt at the conquest of Great Britain which is known to history, that of the Romans.

There is much which, at first sight, might appear to support this suggestion that the brochs may have been the bulwarks of the northern Celts against the encroachments of the Romans. The first time we hear of their doings so far north is in the account of Agricola's campaign during the years 78-85. One of his admirals sailed with a fleet north of Scotland, proved that Great Britain was an island, conquered the Orkneys, and reached a point so far north that he saw the Shetlands, but was obliged to return owing to the unfavourable weather. It is probable that the Romans had never before carried out no work of registration. Further, many brochs consist of earth-covered mounds which are called brochs but which may cover ancient remains of quite another character. On the other hand there exist mounds (tumuli, knowes, &c.) which may cover unknown brochs.



From the excavations of Picts-house at Skaill, Orkney, 1928



View from Picts-house at Skaill, Orkney, looking over the bay
from the South

season of the year.¹ For over five years Agricola persisted in his systematic attempts to conquer Scotland, but the unabated opposition of the Celts and the natural defences which they possessed in the Highlands finally compelled the Romans to entrench themselves on a line from Glasgow to Edinburgh, where the great wall of Antoninus was built during the hundred-and-forties. Incursions to the north were frequently made, such as the Caledonian expedition under Septimius Severus, and the poet Claudian in lauding the deeds of Theodosius in Britain about A.D. 364 says, 'The Orcades ran with Saxon blood. Thule (Shetland) waxed hot with blood of Picts.' This is perhaps not quite reliable history.

From these few details it might possibly be inferred that attempts were really made from time to time with the help of Roman fleets to conquer the Orkneys and Shetlands during the first four centuries after Christ. On this assumption the brochs could be regarded as the outward expression of the resistance offered by the islanders in these centuries.

There are several objections to offer to this explanation, however, chief among them being that the main object of the Romans was hardly the conquest of these most northerly islands of the Atlantic and that the number of the brochs and the enormous energy they represent are not in any reasonable proportion to so distant an effort of the Romans.

The explanation given by Watson in his Rhind Lectures is worthy of close consideration. It is based

¹ Both Tacitus and Ptolemy speak of the Shetlands as Thule. The original Thule of Pytheas is not Shetland but either Iceland or north Norway, but after Tacitus all classical geography continued to call Shetland Thule.

not only on philological but also on archaeological and historical arguments.¹

In the making of Scotland the main stages were *Caledonia*—*Pictavia*—*Scotland*. There is reason to believe that, in common with so many other Celtic tribes, the Picts came to Scotland during the great wave of Celtic invasion in the fifth to third centuries B.C. They formed a military aristocracy rather than the staple of the population.

Of the Celtic tribes domiciled farthest north, a few names have been preserved in Ptolemy and Irish sources. Thus *Caereni*, sheep-folk, lived in north-west Sutherland. In Caithness there lived *Cornavii*, the horn-folk, so called because they lived in a horn, a corner, of Scotland. In the Orkneys there were *Orcas*, after whom the islands were called Orcades. This goes as far back as Pytheas (300 B.C.), and is a formation similar to Cyclades, Echinades, and the like. The word *Orcos* is the Celtic cognate of the Latin *Porcus*, a pig; compare old Erse *Orc*, a young wild-boar. 'The true significance of the ancient term appears clearly to lie in the fact that it was formed from a tribal name *Orcoi*. The Celts admired the boar and they used his figure as a fitting emblem to adorn their shields and helmets.'

From this one may assume that the Orkneys received their name from a Celtic tribe, the wild-boar tribe which settled there in pre-Christian times.

Watson has taken advantage of this result to go farther and seek also for Shetland's pre-Norse name, and is of opinion that he has found it in an Irish source which in addition to *inse orc* has also *inse cat*. The Cat

¹ William J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, Edinburgh and London, 1926.

Islands are undoubtedly the Shetland Islands, which were peopled by the cat tribes just as the Orkneys were inhabited by the wild-boar tribes. Now it was this cat tribe which also peopled and gave Caithness its name. From this Watson concludes that the Shetland cat tribes, having permanently settled in the Shetlands, extended in a southerly direction to the 'Cat Ness' and farther on into Sutherland, where, it is held, their name is to be found.

Both the *orcs* and the *catts* were Pictish Celts. The first time the Picts are mentioned is in the panegyric of the orator Eumenius on the Emperor Constantius Augustus in A.D. 297. Later they are more often mentioned, and it is proved that they were Scotland's most northern tribe. The two chief authorities upon their history are the native authorities Gildas, who died about A.D. 570, and Nennius, writing about A.D. 800. Gildas describes the Picts as coming from the north, from across the sea. Savage men they were, with more hair on their villainous faces than decent clothing on their bodies. They left Britain and then returned, swarming from their curachs (*de curucis*) in which they had crossed the sea. A second time they left and then for the first time settled down in the farthest part of the island, now and again making forays for booty and causing devastation.

Nennius says that the Picts came and occupied the islands called Orcades, and afterwards from these islands wasted many districts and occupied the north of Britain and held the third part of Britain up to the time of Nennius himself. They arrived in Orkney, he says, 800 years after the time when Eli was judge in Israel, i.e., according to modern chronology, 300 B.C.

In Watson's opinion the brochs extended over the whole of this field as Pictish expansion, stretching from the Shetlands and Orkneys to Caithness, Sutherland, and Inverness, in other words what gradually became *Pictavia*. Both the cat folk of the Shetlands and the wild-boar tribes of the Orkneys were the soul of this expansion, which was often subjected to counter-attack by Irish and Hebridean chiefs in the first, third, and seventh centuries after Christ.¹ Both the cat folk and the wild-boar folk were in race and original language approximately the same as all the other Celtic tribes with which they fought, a ruling race of tall, fair or ruddy haired men, blue eyed and large of limb, forming a military aristocracy.

From all this we may reasonably infer that the Picts really did settle at first in the northern isles, and held a position there very similar to that held afterwards by the Norsemen. Thence, like the Norsemen, they gradually extended their power on the mainland and throughout the isles of the west, and, to a less extent, along the west coast. The island Picts were seamen and pirates. The Picts of the mainland were to a considerable extent agriculturists. Once they had become lords of the mainland as far south as Inverness, which they probably did at an early time, they would come in contact with the ruling tribe of the Caledonians, and in the fourth century, when the power of the Caledonians had declined, the Picts assumed the leading place among all the tribes north of the wall of Antoninus, who had been little touched by Roman influence and doubtless considered themselves the noblest of the Britons. In the middle of the sixth century, in Columba's time, their

¹ Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 62, note 2.



The Papil Burra-stone

'capital' was still in the north, and they were ruled by a king, whose word was law in the Orkneys, says Adamnan.

When the hegemony in this way passed to the Picts, the tribes formerly called Caledonians were called collectively Picts, and their country—from the far north to the Forth—came to be called, in Latin, *Pictavia*.

This explanation of Watson's appears at the present stage of the investigations to be that which best solves all problems. If it is correct, then the important question arises whether this piratical community, with large fleets and the brochs for its strongholds, which had its centre in the Orkneys and Shetlands, still existed in the islands when the Norsemen came. It is quite true that in the sixth to seventh century the majority of the Picts moved on into Scotland, but at the same time it must be remembered that the conquest was the work of a few military families. The whole of the Shetland and Orkney tribes did not emigrate to Scotland and the Hebrides.

It is regrettable that for the elucidation of these questions there is a total absence of everything in the shape of antiquities from the Pictish Iron Age. As far as I know no iron goods from pre-Norse times have ever been found either in the Shetlands or Orkneys. In regard to Caithness A. O. Curle stated in 1911 that 'up to the present date there are on record only two reports of excavations of burials from which *iron* grave goods have been recorded'.¹ The question might almost seriously be asked whether the Picts of the north ever had any iron at their disposal.

There are a very few monuments which may perhaps date from the centuries immediately prior to the arrival

¹ The Royal Commission, Third Report, London, 1911, p. xxiv.

in the islands of the Norsemen, and there are the carved stones which have been found in the Shetlands. The best of these is the Burra Stone, which, in 1877, was found in the islands west of Mainland.¹ It is hewn out of a finely grained 'sandstone' and is 6 feet 10 inches high. Its front is covered with a pictorial representation which is concentrated upon a wheelcross with interlaced ornamentation of Celtic pattern. The cross, which is in the centre, is flanked on either side by two ecclesiastical figures dressed in cloaks, with bacula and pointed hoods drawn over the heads. On the base of the cross there is a representation of an animal, a deer or lion, and thereunder two very remarkable figures in human shape.

The Bressay Stone was first seen by Dr. Hamilton, the clergyman of Bressay, just east of Lerwick, in the churchyard of Cullinsbro. It is a small stone, both sides of which are covered with pictures. There is on the one side a wheelcross flanked by two ecclesiastical figures dressed in the same manner as those on the Burra Stone. The centre part is filled with an equestrian figure. In the base there is a figure of an animal. In addition there are on the top of the wheel two animal heads, one of them with open jaws in the act of swallowing the figure of a human being. On the other side of the stone there is also a faint cross with two animal figures and two ecclesiastics with episcopal crooks. On the edge of the stone there is an inscription in Ogham characters which has hardly been correctly deciphered in the accounts hitherto set down.²

¹ Gilbert Goudie, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Antiquities of Shetland*, London, 1914.

² John R. Tudor, *The Orkneys and Shetland. Their Past and Present State*, London, 1883, p. 5 ff.

These very important documents have been too little studied to yield more than a cursory idea of very important historical matters. There are scarcely any absolute parallels to them among the Scotch pictorial stones which have been made known by Baldwin Brown in his studies of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses.¹ The only one appears to be that mentioned by Goudie from Whithorn in Galloway. So much seems certain, however, that the two Shetland stones have been hewn by Christian people and that they can scarcely date later than seventh to eighth or earlier than the sixth century, when the missionaries worked in the Pictish districts.

The only literary evidence there is of this mission is a statement in Adamnan's biography of Columba, wherein mention is made of Corinac, one of the disciples of the Saint, who about the year 580 visited the Orkneys and possibly also the Shetlands, but beyond this bare fact nothing is said.

There can thus be no doubt that the Christian mission penetrated to the Orkneys, but whether it made any progress is another matter. In Watson's opinion 'it would appear that the Picts of Orkney and of the Northern Isles remained pagan after the other Picts had become Christian'. The contention that it is possible to prove the existence of some Celtic churches in the islands may seem to refute this statement. Johan Meyer is of opinion that he has discovered in the Orkneys the ruins of probably six churches which must be of Celtic and not Norse origin.² The best preserved of these is

¹ G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England. The Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses*, London, 1921.

² L. Dietrichson and Johan Meyer, *Monumenta Orcadica*. (The Norsemen in the Orkneys and the monuments they have left, &c.) Oslo, 1906.

the ruin at Deerness, but as regards the others there is some doubt. In addition it is contended that there existed ten other churches, some of them linked, by dedication, with Columba, Brigit, and Ninian, others purely hypothetical. In the same manner Goudie contends that in the Shetlands he has been able to prove three Ninian churches and one Columban.¹

It may be doubtful whether these authorities and ruins can prove the existence of any extensive Celtic Christianity in the islands before the advent of the Norsemen. Watson has drawn attention to

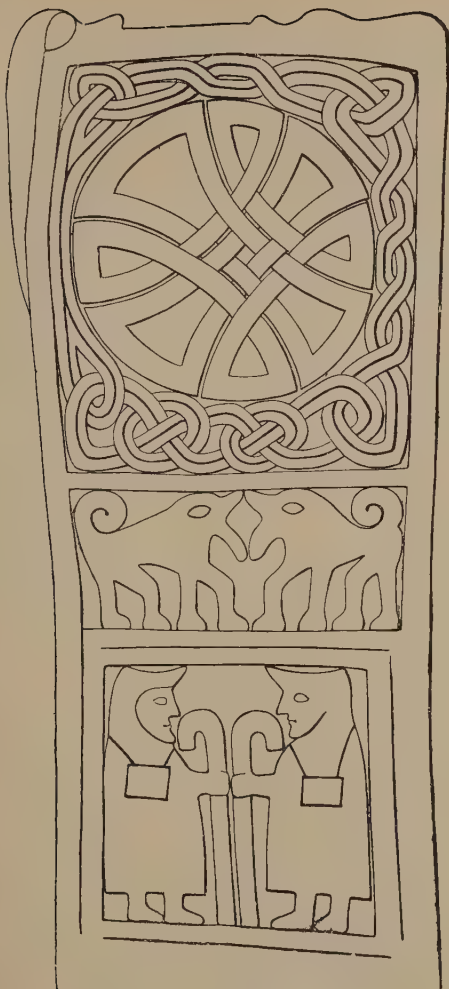
‘another factor that may have to be taken into account, namely migration. The Iceland *Landnámabók* tells how a Norseman named Orlaug, migrating from the Hebrides to Iceland, received from his bishop, who was named Patrick, consecrated earth and other things necessary for founding and equipping a church. Orlaug landed in Iceland, erected a church, and dedicated it to Colum Cille, as directed by the bishop. This took place before A.D. 900.

‘Haldor, son of Illuge the Red, built a church in Iceland thirty ells long, roofed it with wood, and dedicated it to Colum Cille and to God. Elsewhere also newcomers may have taken with them the noted saints of their former districts.

‘It will thus be seen that commemorations of Celtic saints form proof of influence by the Celtic Church, but that as a basis for dating the precise period of that influence they have to be treated with caution. The fact that a church bears the name of Columba does not necessarily imply that it was founded by Columba, or even that it was founded in his time.’

We have no reason to doubt that the real state of affairs was that expressed in a speech by Dicuil (825) concerning the Shetlands and Orkneys, ‘other isles there are, wherein lived for a space of a hundred years hermits, voyaging there from our Scotia (Ireland), but now they

¹ Further information by A. B. Scott, ‘The Celtic Church in Orkney’, *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. iv (1925-6), p. 45.



Stone from Bressay, Shetland

are empty of anchorites by reason of Norse robbers (*causa latronum Nortmannorum*)'. These Irish hermits thus lived in the northern isles during the seventh and eighth centuries.

This brings us to the conclusion to be drawn in reference to the main problem which has been presented. What was the proportion of the broch people which remained on the islands, the pre-Celtic peasant population? What remained of the Christian mission or its anchorites?

That the Norse colonists met with the Picts there is no doubt. This is proved by the name which they gave to the strait between the mainland and the Orkneys—Pettlandsfjord.¹ This expresses the historical state of affairs as it was in the eighth century, when the Norsemen arrived. At that time the whole of north Scotland was still a Pictavia, that which the Norsemen called *Pettland*, the land of the Picts. It was not until the time of the Dalriadic king Kenneth MacAlpine that a Scotland came into being in the eight hundred and forties, when he united Pictland and Dalriada, built his castle at Forteviot and moved the relics of Columba to Dunkeld, the old Caledonian stronghold at the gateway to the Highlands. In the beginning the new kingdom was known as Alba, later Scotia, and about the year 900 the Norsemen called it *Scotland*. The first time we meet with it is in the lay of Glúm Geirason upon Eirik Blodøks (Bloodaxe), which dates from the nine hundred and forties.

In these sources are to be found the historical proof that the Norsemen in Scotland came into contact with

¹ *Pettlandsfjorðr* is first met with in Arnor Thordarsons Thorfinnsdrápa of the eleventh century.

the old Pict tribes and their civilization. They had a good knowledge of the kingdom of the latter, their distribution of power and military aristocracy, their relations with the Scots, Irish, and so forth. These Picts, however, in any case their leading section, seem to have been for the greater part limited to the mainland of Scotland.¹

It is a well-known fact that in the Shetlands and Orkneys there are practically no other place-names than Norse. In Scotland, on the other hand, Celtic place-names outnumber all others by nearly ten to one, except in Caithness, where the Norse percentage is greater. On Lewis the average is 4 Norse names to 1 Gaelic, but in individual parishes it is higher, e.g. in Barvas 27-1, in Uig 35-4. Such clusters of Norse settlements seem comparable with conditions in modern America, where the Norwegian settlements have a marked tendency to cluster.

In the other islands of the Hebrides group the Norse place-names are less frequent. While in Skye they are still 3-2, south of this they are in the minority. In Islay the average is 1 Norse to 2 Celtic, in Kintyre 1-4, and in Arran and Man 1-8.

In the west and north, from Caithness to Beaully, strong Norse influence caused a great displacement of old names. In the Long Island, from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head, Norse must long have been the pre-

¹ The statement, which is to be found in *Chronicon Norvegiae* and is repeated in Bishop Thomas's genealogical table of the earldom about 1430 (Goudie, page 42), that when Harald the Fair-Haired was king the Orkneys were inhabited by two races (*nationes*) *peti et pape*, can scarcely be regarded as historical tradition. It has more the appearance of construction. That it is unreliable is clear from the fact that it asserts the name Orkney to be new.

dominant language, if not the only one. Here there are indeed many Gaelic names, but all the more important names are Norse.

Caithness, part of the old Pictish homeland, must have been mainly Norse-speaking for many centuries, Sutherland in a less degree. Ross is shot through with Norse names.

Now, there is one main point in this naming which is conclusive for our problem. The Norse newcomers very often adopted the old name, adding their own generic terms. This we can see in England, Ireland, and Scotland, &c. We can also, to a very great extent, point out within these districts old Celtic names which the Norsemen discarded and remodelled, e.g. Helmsdale in Caithness, the old name of which is *Strath-ilidh*. Neither of these processes is rediscoverable in the Shetlands and Orkneys, however. On the whole these islands have no Celtic place-names of such a nature as to represent an extensive old population in existence when the Norsemen arrived.

This statement, no doubt, conflicts with the opinion formed by Jakobsen when making his collection of Shetland place-names. He considered that there were certain Celtic elements in Norwegian names which went to prove that the Norsemen had subjected and exterminated the Celtic population.¹

On testing the evidence advanced, it will be found that this conclusion cannot be correct.

The small group of Celtic names here in question consists of about 25-30 names. In contrast to this, it

¹ Jakob Jakobsen, *Shetlandsøenes stedsnavne, Årbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed*, Kjøbenhavn, 1901. Also the same author in *Maal og Minne*, Oslo, 1911, p. 324.

must be remembered that the total number of Norse place-names in the Shetlands probably amounts to about 50,000 or perhaps even twice that number.

'Every fairly small mound, point, cliff, valley, crevice, stream, piece of ploughed land and field has its own name, and these names with comparatively few exceptions have been handed down in Norse-dialect. The tiny island of Fetlar, the area of which is not one square mile, has about two thousand place-names, and the total number of place-names in the islands undoubtedly exceeds 50,000.'

The Norse names in the Shetlands which are reminiscent of the Celts are partly such as contain the tribal name of the Picts, partly those which have retained the Norse description of the Irish priests, *papa*. Both groups are only sparsely represented.

Between Tingwall and Delting on Mainland there is a *Pettadal*, with a *Pettawater*, and of this remarkable dell there are many stories told of ghosts and sorcery in connexion with the Picts. A similar *Pettadal* also exists in Northmaven. In addition, there is a *Pettigards fell* on Whalsay and a place on Unst which they call *Pettister*. On the same islands there is also a slope with a ravine which is called *Pettasmog*, the Picts' passage. There are also two other names, *Pettafjell* and *Pettanasjego* on South Yell. Connected with some of these places there are tales of supernatural things. In some of them there are also doubtful Celtic remains, which may be the actual reasons for the names. It is not reasonable to assert dogmatically that these few names have been given to these actual places alone and not to farms or cultivated land. No one can seriously believe that Picts lived on the summit of Pettafell or in the deep, narrow mountain crevice known as Pettasmog, or

again in the deserted Pettadal, where no living being has ever dwelt.

It can safely be said that these names prove the opposite of what they are asserted to mean. They are the expression of antiquarian ideas on the part of the Norsemen, a sign of their interest in the Picts, of whom they had heard, and who had become legendary persons in a mythical world because they no longer played any part as living elements in the Shetlands.

It is the same with the word *papa*. First and foremost there are the well-known islands of *Papa Stour* and *Papa Litle* off the west coast of Mainland. In Burra and one or two other places there is the form *Papyl*, a name which is also known in Iceland. On Fetlar there is a warm spring, *Papilwater*; at Noss, near Bressay, a ravine known as *Papilsgjö*; and off Scalloway there is a *Papa Skerry*, while in other places there are rocks and islets which are designated *Papasker* and the like.

To these names the same principle applies. Not only have they no connexion whatever with dwellings or settlements—they are only natural names for islets and rocks, water and hills—but they have no well-founded internal connexion with the person whose name they bear, the priest. Numerous priest rocks (*presteskjær*), priest islets (*presteholmer*), priest strands (*pretestrander*), priest fields (*prestekamper*), exist in Norway, but no one seriously believes that priests dwelt in them. The designations merely record a custom of naming, an old mentality into which we need not enter.

It is these *papa* names which to some extent in Iceland and the Faroes, as well as in the Shetlands and Orkneys, have given rise to theories of Christian missions.

In the case of the other group, the pure Celtic names in the Shetlands, there must be another explanation. The list includes about twenty-five names, all names of natural features—mountains, peaks, hills, mounds, nesses, knolls, points, &c., and in addition the names of islets, pastures, and plains. Further, a few words are included such as *brod*, *dal*, *rental*, &c.

From careful examination of this material it will be seen that the names all have common characteristics. They are either names of localities connected with pastures, or they refer to fishing-places and sea-marks. On the whole, such names as are used by every one who keeps sheep, horses, or cows, or who fishes and rows, or in some other manner uses the sea. Thirdly, they may be names of land belonging to farms or houses. They originated with people whose horizon was limited to work in the fields or on the sea, and the explanation seems to be a simple one. The character of this store of Celtic words reflects the social class of the people from whom they sprang. It was not a broch aristocracy, nor was it an independent farming class. It was a subordinate element of labourers and servants. The very fact that these names survived the Norse settlement definitely indicates that they come from Celtic people in Norse service. This is implied by the great variety of linguistic derivations of the words in question, Irish, Cymric, Welsh, Gaelic, Pictish, Scotch, &c. A homogeneous, autochthonous, and independent Celtic population would not have left such names behind it.

In addition to all this, there is the absolutely conclusive fact that in the Shetlands there is not one single Celtic village or farm-name of the types which are so common in Scotland and Ireland.

This little band of Celtic workers in Norse service was not a reduced de-classed remnant of the old Celtic population of the islands. They originated in the same manner as the Celtic element in Iceland, with whose history we are so familiar from the *Landnámabók*, Celts in the service of Norsemen, who emigrated to Iceland with their masters. They do not belong to the period of the first Norse settlement, but in all likelihood to the later centuries, when the connexion between Norsemen and the Celts was more developed.

It thus appears that the final conclusion is bound to be that the Norsemen did not destroy a numerous Celtic population in the Shetlands and Orkneys. They did not wage a war of extermination against such a population or drive it into the sea and seize its possessions, its farms, and its civilization. It also seems clear that a race which possessed the great brochs for defence, and real fleets of ships, would not have allowed itself to be destroyed by the Norsemen even if the craftsmanship of the latter in the shaping of weapons was superior and their art in shipbuilding of a very high order.

The facts stated above enable us to answer the question about the relation of the Norse settlers to a previous Celtic population. The question is not whether the Norsemen found the Shetlands and Orkneys uninhabited or not; it concerns the degree and character of the pre-Norse civilization, and the extent to which the remnants of the ancient Celtic population were able to resist the Norse settlers.

The inference to be drawn from the facts is that the ancient Pictish population had at any rate lost the military strength which it possessed when the broch culture was at its height. Had this not been so, the complete

disappearance of the broch people could only have come about through a struggle lasting for many years and involving a deliberate and systematic policy of conquest on the part of the Norse invaders.

This was exactly what happened, as every one knows, in England and France; yet in these cases the utmost output of energy on the part of the Danes and Norsemen did not lead to the extirpation of the English and French inhabitants or of their civilization: it did not even lead to a predominance of Norse elements in the place-names and language of the two countries.

In England and France, the meeting between Scandinavian invaders and native population led to a period of warfare and unrest, traditions of which are preserved in considerable bulk. In Scotland, no doubt, conditions were less favourable to the preservation of such traditions. But, in spite of this, it is inconceivable that a real Norse conquest could have taken place without leaving some trace in the shape of legends or myths about some kind of warlike achievements. But not the slightest trace of such stories exists either in the Orkneys or in the Shetlands. The only thing of the kind is a few tales about Pictish sorcery—a perfect parallel to the part played by the *finns* (Lapps) in the popular legends of Norway.

Farther to the south, of course, the power of resisting the Norse invasion increased. The numerical proportion of place-names, referred to above, is an excellent index of this power. The almost complete absence of Pictish place-names in the islands north of Scotland can only indicate the absence of any considerable or effective resistance in this region.

The most probable answer to our question, then, is

that about A.D. 800 the Pictish population in Orkney and Shetland, and to some extent in Caithness, had lost its organization and power of resistance, and had perhaps also declined in numbers and in wealth.

How, then, we naturally ask, did the once powerful and relatively wealthy population that built the brochs change and decline to this extent? Perhaps the broch-people, small in numbers, a warlike aristocracy, had gradually drifted away from the islands into the Scottish mainland, leaving the poorer classes of Celts in possession. Perhaps for some reason the broch-people had sunk in the scale of civilization. In either case, there must be some connexion between this change and the climatic changes mentioned above as having occurred in the early centuries of our era and having radically altered the conditions of life in Orkney and Shetland.

The civilization of the broch-people must have been largely dependent on the possession of strong fleets, implying the construction of ships in the islands themselves, quite independently of any other district or country. Now one of the most important results of the climatic change was the destruction of the forests in Orkney and Shetland. In a few centuries these forests practically disappeared, and the population and, in particular, its aristocracy were deprived of one of their most precious possessions, while at the same time a general change took place in all the conditions of life.

If Watson's theory of the brochs as pirates holds is correct, it follows as a matter of course that the loss of materials for shipbuilding was fatal. In any case, we know from Norwegian history that it was this very *skiplöysa*, lack of ships, that contributed to the decline of Iceland in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, when

circumstances in Norway made it impossible for the Icelanders to renew their supplies of timber and ships.

The result of the changes in the Scottish isles must have been that in the course of a few centuries the broch-people lost the very foundation of their aristocratic position and power. In this connexion we may refer to the discoveries in the Picts'-houses and earth-houses in the isles,¹ which show a rather primitive, though rich, civilization with strong hunting element (whale, seal, wild-fowl), assignable to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.

The question, we must repeat, is not whether Orkney and Shetland were inhabited at all, but what was the social level of the scanty native population at the beginning of the Norse settlement. To this we can now reply that the Pictish population of the isles was not in a position to make any effective resistance, and that therefore the Norse settlement was not a military conquest but a relatively peaceful and gradual colonization. Great collections of swords, spear-heads, battle-axes, and other weapons, like those found in the neighbourhood of London, York, or Dublin,² have never come to light in Orkney, Shetland, or Caithness.

On the whole, the relation between Celtic and Norse populations in the northern Scottish islands was much

¹ Especially the discoveries from Lewis in the Hebrides (Erskine Beveridge collection, now in the National Museum at Edinburgh) and the recent discoveries from Skaill in Orkney by Professor V. Gordon Childe. See also George Archibald, 'List of Antiquities relating to Orkney in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh' (*Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. iii (1924-5), p. 81).

² R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, *London and the Vikings*, London Museum Catalogues, No. 1, London, 1927.

the same as in the Faroes and Iceland. Neither in the Faroes nor in Iceland was any part in the development of Norse civilization taken by an aboriginal Celtic element. The Celtic influence in these regions dates from a later age, the tenth to twelfth centuries.

It seems equally clear that the Picts of the northern isles in the eighth century had no organization such as a strong kingdom or chieftaincy which could have resisted the Norse invasion.

Such was the foundation on which the Norse settlement was built. The settlers came sailing to a land in which there were few people. On all sides they saw traces of old houses and farms, ruins and foundations of houses and outhouses. The greatest impression they received was that created by the sight of the old brochs. All their imagination was fired. It was inevitable that the Norsemen in the Shetlands and Orkneys should become interested in antiquities. Did they not step ashore into a veritable museum?

Finally, it is certain that when the Norse settlement first began, the political interests of the Picts had already moved in a southerly direction, across the Pentland Firth into the mainland of Scotland. There they gradually lost that facility in the use of ships and that aptitude for maritime life which must have distinguished the Celtic Wild Boar races on the Orkneys and the Cat tribes of the Shetlands for the first centuries of our era.

III

OLD GROUND AND NEW

*Torkell Onondarsun austmadr af Rogalande bygde denna stad fyrst.*¹
—Faroe Runic Stone, 13th century.

THE Norwegian emigration to America in the nineteenth century took place at first mainly from the less accessible valleys and districts which, with their poor communications, were completely impoverished under the new economic conditions. With the spread of the American 'fever', however, it ceased to be confined to these places and assumed a national aspect. In spite of this, after the experience of a hundred years we are able to indicate quite plainly certain districts where emigration to America has become an integral part of the mentality and daily life of the people: where America is to be reckoned with as a factor in their environment and often as an influence upon the education of youth. There are many who sally forth, toil for some years 'over there', and return home again richer in knowledge and experience. Even the many who settle in America do much to enrich, in various ways, the life of the old country.

The question how far all this applies to the ancient emigration to the Shetlands and the Orkneys might, perhaps, be considered a difficult one to answer. It might be thought that our sources of information in this connexion were poorer than those in respect of conditions in our own times. In reality this difficulty is more apparent than real. The origin of the ancient

¹ Torkell Onondsson, 'east-man' from Rogaland (in Norway) settled at this place first.

emigration, the move from old ground to new, is illuminated from two quarters. Both place-names and ancient remains can furnish us with important information.

No one who seeks to become familiar with the history and civilization of the Scottish islands can possibly ignore the work of Jakob Jakobsen, that indefatigable and remarkable student of Shetland-Norse, the Faroe islander who for years wandered on foot over the whole of the Shetlands and Orkneys, studied the dialect of the people in their daily toil on sea and land, and listened to their conversations in the evenings when the day's work was done, that he might collect and preserve the fragments of Norse which, in the nineties, still remained in the Shetlands. This monumental labour calls for our gratitude to a man who was willing to devote his life to such a limited object in order to go to the root of things.

Jakobsen collected, in all, some 10,000 words of Norse origin in the Shetlands. With these he compiled a voluminous dictionary which was published after his death.¹ In his introductory remarks he also deals with the origin of Shetland-Norse, and although his comparative material was of a very summary kind, the results are of interest. The main general result proves to be that, in vocabulary, Shetland-Norse is allied to the dialects of the south-western districts of Norway, chiefly Agder—Rogaland. So impressed was Jakobsen with the great percentage of words from these districts, that he even came to the conclusion that the Shetlands must have been populated almost exclusively from

¹ J. Jakobsen, *Etymologisk Ordbog over det Norroene sprog på Shetland*, Kjøbenhavn, 1921. See also his treatise, *Det Norroene sprog på Shetland*, Kjøbenhavn, 1897.

Hordaland, Rogaland, and Agder, and especially from the districts of Jæren and Dalane.

This result also agrees with that arrived at by M. Hægstad from an analysis of the Shetland diplomatic language in connexion with a study of the old Hildinakvede (Hildina Lay). Hægstad considers that the Shetland dialect, as it is formed in the Hildinakvede, is chiefly related to the dialects of Rogaland and West Agder.¹ It is clearly distinguishable from the dialect of East Agder by its vowels, while its consonantal sounds separate it from the dialects north of Ryfylke. He adds that, from the examples available, the Orkney dialect seems to have been very similar to that of the Shetlands; the difference which is noticeable in the old language being that in the Orkney dialect soundless consonants were made sonant, while in the Shetland dialect the chief feature was the compression of the diphthongs.

It is not difficult to find many examples of this resemblance with south-west Norwegian dialects, both in the existing Shetland dialect in the nineteenth century and the old diplomatic language, but the question is one of minor interest in the present connexion. Our objective here is the more special results which can be obtained from place-names. A typical example of their value in this respect is the number of places named after others. The ancient Norse provincial name *Voss*, east of Bergen, is found again in Unst in the Shetlands. The remarkable form *Mostr* in Söndhordland in south-west Norway is also known in Mainland, while the old *Florevaag* near Bergen has its counterpart in Fluravag

¹ Marius Hægstad, 'Hildinakvadet med utgreiding um det norske mål på Shetland i eldre tid', *Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter*, Oslo, 1900.

in Unst. This naming is quite natural and has its counterpart in the emigration of our own times. A similar naming process can also be shown in individual cases of names of farms. *Visdal* in Shetland is undoubtedly named after the farm of that name at Austad, Lyngdal in Agder, *Godal* on Rousay (Orkneys) after *Gydal* in Helleland, Jæren, and *Troswick* in the Shetlands after *Trossevigen* near Egersund. There are other examples which could be mentioned.

More important and more central than this is, however, the whole of the independent Shetland and Orkney nomenclature of houses and farms, inasmuch as this gives us a fuller picture of the emigration, its origin, and development.

A glance at a modern map of the Shetlands and Orkneys immediately reveals special features in regard to their place-names. Certain nominal elements such as *geo*, *vik*, *clett*, *berg*, *nes*, *hevdi* (Icelandic *höfði*), *skerry*, *taing*, *hamar*, &c., appear again and again in names descriptive of natural features and are easily recognizable as of Norse origin. None of these are indicative of local geographic position, however, with the exception of that in Norway known as *drang*, *dreng* (Old Norse *drangr*, pointed cliff), which is only known on the coast of Agder-Hordaland and which in the Shetlands and Orkneys occurs both as a joint name and in place-names such as, for example, the high stone columns out in St. Magnus's Bay in the Shetlands.

The most central of all this material is, however, to be found in the old farm names now applied equally to crofts and the larger collections of farms not only on the islands but also on the Scottish mainland. The best basis for an investigation is Jakobsen's comprehensive

collection of the Shetlands. Of the greatest importance is also H. Marwick's collections from parts of the Orkneys (N. Ronaldsay, Rousay, Stronsay, Papa Westray).¹ In regard to the mainland of Scotland and the Hebrides there are also various collections of material. In the meantime our chief consideration will be the Shetland names, which also, to some extent, will illustrate conditions in the Orkneys and other districts.

The elements most frequent in the names of the old farms in the Shetlands are very restricted in number, and occur in those names which have *-ster* or simply *setr* as their second syllable, and also in names in combination with *-bister*, *-sta*, *-gaard*, and *land*. A large number of others such as *vik*, *voe*, *ness*, *hamar*, *by*, *lee*, &c., are of so general a character that they do not repay an investigation which has for its object the discovery of sources of origin.²

In order to give some idea of the ratio between the forms which are italicized in the note—it can be said roughly that the *ster* group is without comparison the greatest, with a proportion of 40 per cent. *Gaard* comes next with 25 per cent., and finally the three groups *bister*, *sta*, and *land* each with about 12–13 per cent. In all probability these name-forms reveal something of the identity of the original pioneers of the old Norse colonization.

¹ In *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vols. i, iii, v.

² In 1860 Arthur Laurenson (in *Annaler for nordisk oldkyn-dighed*) published a survey of the distribution of a total of 854 names which he had studied in the Shetlands. The figures are to some extent representative and are therefore reproduced here. *Setr* (including *bister*) 176, *gaard* 115, *hus* 60, *ness* 59, *land* 55, *vik* 44, *fjeld* 42, *dale* 32, *sta* 29, *pund* 29, *houll* 29, *burgh* 24, *firth* 23, *brake* 21, *voe* 19, *toft* 16, *lee* 16, *ting* 15, *wall* 11, *gardie* 11, *gord* 11, *quoy* 10, *hamar* 9.

The numerous class of names in which *-ster* is the second element preserve within themselves the Old Norse word *setr*, the primary meaning of which is a place in which to dwell, but which both in the Shetland dialect and in Norse has the secondary meaning of *seter*, cattle pastures, either in the fields or on the mountains. It is often a matter of difficulty to differentiate in the Shetlands between the two forms, inasmuch as many pasture-names have later become farm-names.

In Jakobsen's comprehensive collection a number of forms can be picked out which prove that, even as late as the thirteenth century, the original sense of *setr* was still in use. An old feature is also that they are, to a great extent, combined with the names of persons, which in many cases probably are those of actual settlers during the first wave of colonization. Examples of these are:

Bardister, originally Baardsseter from the male name Baard, *Barfennsetter* (1600), from Bergfinn; *Hestinsetr*, from Eystein; *Ketelster*, from Ketill; *Krukster*, from Krökr; *Levister* on Whalsay, from Leiv. *Mangaster* was originally Magnus-setr, which plainly proves that its date cannot be earlier than the eleventh century. A name like *Semblister*, the older forms of which are preserved, covers a Solmundarsetr and tells how great the erosion has been. *Tronister* near Lerwick is derived from Old Norse Tráendr, Trond. *Tirvister* comes from the man's name Torve. *Ukinster* at Conningsburgh is a corruption of Haakonssetr. *Okister* on Fetlar was originally Hoskuldsetr.

These few names, which have been chosen quite at random, are typical examples of this great name-series in the Shetlands. They could be supplemented by many examples from the Orkneys and the mainland of Scot-

land. They show that, while the *setr* names go back even to the period of the first settlement, they also continued to be given for many years after.

Many of the *ster* names also have reference to natural marks of identification, such as *Huster*, which expressed Haaset, the high-lying dwelling-place; *Kulster* from the original Kollasetr, the house on the knoll; *Bruster*, Bruarsetr, the house by the bridge; *Gjoster*, Gjaasetr, the house by the gorge.

Konister comes from Konungssetr, a farm which has been a royal domain.

The great transformation which has taken place in these names also shows, in many cases, that through them we go to the very roots of the Norse settlement. *Nister* in Northmavine is the successor of Nestasetr, the nethermost or nearest dwelling. Metaphorically speaking, even in their eroded forms such names reveal the features of the original landscape.

The *Setr* names are also very general in the Orkneys, and they extend into Caithness. In the Hebrides there are not a few of them, but owing to contact of so many languages they are often less recognizable. Grimshader is the old Grimssetr in its Gaelic form *seadair*.

It is quite clear, however, that a considerable number of the existing names in combination with *setr*, *setter*, which refer to pasturages, or which are purely and simply new-formed names of farms, are of later date, and it can hardly be doubted that this form has been one of the most popular elements in the composition of names at all times in the history of the Shetlands. A place such as *Marister* is ancient *Marrasetr*, and was originally simply and solely a horse pasturage. Similarly *Nedister*, an old *Nautasetr*, was a cattle pasture.



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Many other examples could be quoted (denoting sheep, pig, and similar pastures).

We are here in possession of historical matter in which a wealth of information of various kinds is to be found. In those stages of the Norse colonization which were marked by special phases the *setr* names, according to Magnus Olsen's classification, stand out sharply in a social as well as in a geographical sense.¹ They are represented in Norway by a total of 900, and their use is, to a very great extent, limited to the coast districts between Møre and Trøndelag, in the old jurisdiction of the Frostating, where considerably more than half their number are to be found. The majority are contained in the fjord and coast districts of Volda—Örskaug—Aalesund, and further, Veøy—Molde—Kvernnes—Kristiansund, where, in many districts, there are to be found no less than ten.

That, on the whole, they are representative of the last centuries of heathendom in Norway is evident, among other things, from their combination with *hov* and *heilag*. There are to be found Frøysetr, Hovsetr, Helgasetr, but, on the other hand, none which contain the names of the older gods such as Ull or Njord. Their date in Norway can, therefore, undoubtedly be put as sixth to eighth century. In the latter country also they are to a very great extent used in combination with the names of persons.

Their origin in Norway is clearly traceable to such outdoor appurtenances of old farms as *akr* (furrow),

¹ Magnus Olsen, *Farms and Fanes of Ancient Norway. The Place-Names of a Country discussed in their Bearings on Social and Religious History*, Oslo, 1928, Instituttet for sammenlignende Kulturforskning, Serie A, ix.

korn (grain), *bygg* (barley), *rug* (rye), *eng* (field), *fe* and *kyr* (cattle), *ross* and *marra* (horse), *geit* (goat), *sau* (sheep), *svin* (pig), or by such a prefix as *Ladusetr*, a hay-barn. All these refer to the domains of an old estate. They mark the development from the field-name to the farm-name, and tell of old farming customs, whereby the hayfields and pastures developed into separate farms and became self-supporting by the cultivation of barley or rye, or by the keeping of goats and sheep, cattle or pigs, and the like. It must be considered as probable that it was the sons of freedmen, *rekstegnar* and *árbornir*, who gradually developed these places into independent farms, in addition to which they also carried on hunting and trapping to supplement those forms of livelihood which were the actual basis of the farming activity.

The whole of this development, which took place in Norway on the coast-line Möre—Trøndelag to Nordland created in the sixth to eighth centuries a new class of peasantry which, in comparison to the older, social upper class was, perhaps, in the beginning, looked down upon as something lower in rank, but which gradually developed into an independent peasant society. Not a few of the members of this sprang from the ancient 'odel' families whose tradition they carried on.

This development took place in its entirety, however, prior to the period of the emigration to the islands of the western sea.

The sequel can be quite easily explained. During the course of the eighth century these *setr* farms became over-populated. Owing to their extensive nature, they were not rich enough to support the development which took place; and as a result of the odel system of inheri-

tance many of the younger members of the families sought newer spheres, new possibilities, new ground. This resulted in emigration in two main directions.

The one went east and south, into the interior of Norway, where numerous *set* names in Glaama's valleys and the Mjös districts of the Uplands bear witness to the settlement of the younger generations on new soil. Still farther east they pushed to Jemtland, and everywhere the forest districts in the eighth and ninth centuries yielded to the onward march of the iron axe.

The other main direction led across the water to the Western Isles, to the Shetlands, the Orkneys, and the Hebrides, where this peasant youth from Fjordene—Möre—Trøndelag found their new sphere of activity.

In this connexion a most important fact must be observed. There are absolutely no *setr* names in the Faroes and Iceland.

The *setr* emigration from Möre and its colonization of the Shetlands, Orkneys, Hebrides, and Scotland thus received its definite bounds. The historical result was that the peasant youth of Möre and Trøndelag through several generations emigrated to the west in greater or smaller waves. In Möre, the Shetlands and Orkneys became to the youth of that period what America has been to the modern youth, a 'promised land'. Against this background it was quite natural that when the earldom made its appearance, in the ninth century, its holders were men of Möre race. This did not take place until two or three generations of Norsemen had consolidated their position as inhabitants of the Shetlands and Orkneys, and the development was a natural consequence of the strong ties by which the islands were at that time bound to Möre.

Among the Norwegian colonists in modern America there have gradually been formed various associations indicative of the local Norwegian origin of their members. Thus there is the Valdres Association, the Halling Association, the Trönder Association, and so on. Even if we have no cause to imagine the existence of similar associations in the olden days, the fact remains that the Möre contingent formed such an influential part of the colony that it was but natural the king should turn to a Möre family for his earls.

A circumstance which calls for attention is that, among the *setr* names of the Shetlands and Orkneys, there appears to be none which preserve the memory of heathen worship, no Frøyset, Hovset, or Helgeset. This is most probably because Christian influence early made itself felt in the islands.

A purely casual knowledge of the structure of these place-names often leads to the confusion of the *-ster* names with those which end in *-bister*. In reality the latter element is quite different and is derived from Old Norse *bólstaðr*, a dwelling-place, a house. Even if this type of name does not occupy such a dominating position in the Shetlands and Orkneys as the *-setr* names, nevertheless its position is also a central one. In certain places in the Shetlands it has undergone the same changes as in Norway, as, for example, the name *Mukkelbusta* in the Shetlands which corresponds to the *Mukkelbust* (Myklebostad, the great farm) of Jæren in Norway. Otherwise the general corruption of the name, both in the Shetlands and Orkneys as well as in Caithness, is *-bister*. Again, in the Hebrides we meet with forms which are parallel to those in Norway, *Melbosst* (Midbostad, the middle farm), which corresponds to

Mæbosst at Stordal in Sunmör. In the Hebrides there are also to be found such present-day Norwegian forms as *Shawbost*, *Crossbost*, and the like. In Caithness there is, in *Scrabster*, *Lybster*, *Sibster*, a third form of the same name.

In the Shetlands where the *bolstad* names can best be studied they may be said to form in the first place a positional, geographical group, north or south, east or west, upper or outer, and so on, in exactly the same manner as in Norway, or, as is most common in the latter country, to interpret two main facts such as *Mykle* (*bolstad*) and *Helge* (*bolstad*). This is apparent from the following brief summary:

	<i>Shetland.</i>	<i>Norway.</i>
North	Norbister	Norbossta
South	Symbister	
East	Isbister	
West		Vespesta (Böml)
Upper	Efrabister	
Outer	Utrabister	Utibolster (Agder)
Great	Muklebusta	Myklebosta, many in the western district of Norway, the most common of all <i>bolstad</i> names
Little	Litlebusta	Lillebosta (Möre)
Flat	Fladabister	
Steep	Brattabister	
Wide	Breibister	
Water	Wadbister	
Sacred	Heglibister	Helgebosta, which with Myklebust is the most common in Norway.

The Shetland *bolstad* names have the same group formations as in Norway and refer to the farm, which is described as north, south, east or west, upper or outer. The most common form in Norway, however, is *Mykle-bolstad*, the great farm proper.

The author cannot possibly accept the current teaching upon the development of the *bolstad* name in Norway, which holds that the word is a collective name for small farms which chance to cluster together and can thus form one domain. The manifest untenability of this view is evident, not only from the intense concentration upon the words *mykli* and *helgi*, but also from the fact that, whereas we have, for example, 900 *setr* names in Norway, we have only, at the outside, ninety *bolstad* names. More than half of these consist of Myklebolstad and one-sixth, at least, of Helgebolstad. Further, while there are many districts which can show names compounded of *setr*, *land*, *stadir*, and similar elements, there does not exist a single district in the whole of Norway in which there can be discovered more than one, or at the most two, *bolstad* names.

Even if *bolstad* cannot compete with *boer*, the old manor house, in size and importance, yet it must seem to be a natural conclusion, from the facts under consideration, that in the western area of Norway, where it is most frequent, it represents a type of farm on an equality with *bær*, the old family estate. Even though opinions may differ as to the manner of this development, one thing at least is plain, that during the eighth century along the whole of the west coast of Norway *bolstad* was *the* farm, ranking in dignity as if it were the old family estate.

The *bolstad* name thus leads us back to the same source of the emigration in Norway as that indicated by the *setr* names, the north-western area of the country, and more particularly Möre. That the emigrants carried the heathen religion with them is here undoubtedly made plain by the *Heglibister* names which are to be

found both in the Shetlands and in the other Scotch districts.

This is not in any way contradicted by the existence in the Shetlands and Orkneys of *Kirkabister* or *Kirbuster*, literally the church dwelling-place. Here, as in Norway, we have to do with a simple *bolstad*, which, after the introduction of the Roman Catholic religion, received a descriptive prefix. Analogies to this are to be found in other name groups both in Norway and the Scottish islands.

Finally, it is often difficult in the Shetlands and Orkneys to differentiate between the *setr* and *bolsta* names and those which end in *sta*—at any rate in their present forms. All three differ very greatly, however, and lack that inward unity which might perhaps be expected. So far as can be seen the *sta* names in the Shetlands and Orkneys are the most numerous of those which we have under consideration, and the very fact that *sta* is the dominating element in the formation of names in Iceland is a matter of profound interest.

Stadir—the dwelling-place, the farm—developed as a plural formation, is, as a rule, easily recognizable in the Shetlands even in the existing forms. In general it is combined with the names of persons, more rarely with names descriptive of natural features or other compounds indicative of characteristics. Thus, there is *Ballista*, from Bolle, the name of a man, *Basta* from Bessi, *Grimista* from Grim, *Gunnista*, which is either derived from Gunnar or Gunhild, *Hoversta* from Havn, *Oddsta* from Odd, *Ringasta* from the very ancient male name of Ring, *Ulstá* from Ulv, and so on.

More rare are such names as *Grista*, which must undoubtedly originate in the Old Norse *grið*, a sanctuary,

a place of immunity. It must be mentioned that this place is in the immediate vicinity of the old main moot-place of the Shetlands, which, even at the present day, is known as Tingwall, just north of Scalloway, 'Skaalavaag', the bay where the booths stood. *Klusta* has undoubtedly its origin in claw, ness, or tongue, and *Sotersta* contains *setr*, and is to be found in the same form in Iceland.

From the manner in which conditions have developed in Norway and the Western Isles we can clearly perceive how the *sta* names came to be connected with this emigration to the Orkneys and Shetlands. *Stadir*, which occurs in Norway in 2,500 cases, is, especially in the districts of the interior, emphatically a name of a secondary character which has proceeded from the *boer* class in exactly the same manner as *setr* and *land*. It is, however, a very important and interesting circumstance that the *stadir* type of name became so extensive in Iceland and in that country developed independently in a manner characteristically different from its Norwegian counterpart. This was quite reasonable, since the natural conditions in Iceland provided their own type of livelihood. In Iceland *stadir* came into use in the second and third generations, and referred, not to the estates of the early settlers, but to the parts which were severed from them by purchase or in some other manner.

Among the participants in the emigration to Scotland who came from Agder-Rogaland, there were not a few who hailed from *stadir* areas, especially those which were the original homes of the Norsemen of the Western Isles and Iceland.

One thing which is particularly noteworthy is that,

as in the case of *setr*, both *sta* and *bolsta*, which in Norway are perhaps of a secondary nature, are, in the Shetlands and Orkneys at all events, primary elements. They all signify the farm, the dwelling-place, the place.

There is reason to emphasize this at the present juncture, for otherwise one might ask why such a fundamental and original element as *bær*, 'the estate' *par excellence* in Norway, is not to be found to any noteworthy extent in the Shetlands, Orkneys, or the other districts. In Norway *bær* was old when the period of emigration first began. It was so old that it had gradually developed into a name for a collection of farms, a cluster sprung from one original farm. Often this farm was an ancient family estate and, in any case, its importance was great.

As a matter of fact *bær* does occur here and there in the Scottish Isles. There is *Kjorkabi*, the old Kirkjubøer, so called after the church came. On Shetlands' Mainland there is a *Melbi* (Melby), the old *Medalboer*, which indicates the division of an old farm, as also does *Norbi*, nordböen. *Toptebi* is tofteböen, and tells of the farm where lay old foundations, probably the ruins of Celtic houses and farms. That these *bö*-names are not necessarily so old is shown by such a name as *Voksterbi*, which is a corruption of *Vaagsetr-bö*. Similarly there is a *Bjostr* which comes from *Bojarsetr*. On Stronsay in the Orkneys Marwick is of opinion that he can prove the existence of divisions of a *bö*-farm which would seem to be of great age. This, in itself, is undoubtedly correct, but on the whole the *bö*-names are exceptional in the islands. Neither can they be found anywhere as names for collections of farms, which, on the other hand, are indicated in the Shetlands by such as *ster*, *bister*, *sta*, and *land*.

The explanation of these various facts is quite clear. The history of the early development of such elements as *bö*, *setr*, *bolstad*, and *stadir* belongs to Norway alone, and the Faroes, Iceland, Shetlands, and Orkneys have no part in it. To understand the growth of place-names through the period of emigration, it is necessary to know the stage of development which these names had reached in Norway when the emigration commenced. The important thing is the point of development which the names had reached in the eighth century, their meaning at that time, and what they stood for in the opinion and respect of the people. Thus it was in Möre the *setr* class which were more or less responsible for the emigration. It was the work of the *setr* which had created them, it was the *setr* which was new, and to the majority of this class the *boer* was something regarded as an antiquity. If *boer* in Norway was socially on a higher plane than *setr* and *land*, it is not to be implied that this was the case in the Shetlands and Orkneys. In the latter places a new development set in, and its course was not dependent upon Norway's, but upon the lines of progress which were indicated by the natural conditions offered by the islands. In other words, it is quite wrong simply to take the results of studies of the Norse place-names and apply them to Scotland and make them the rule there. In the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Caithness, and so on, the character of *setr*, *bolsta*, and *sta* was primary fundamental.

Finally, there is the element *land*, which in the islands is a fundamental element in the structure of names. It is used not only in combination with farm-names but also in place-names for large districts. It is also applied to pieces of ground, ploughed fields, and meadows,



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though in these cases preferably in the plural. It is a common farm-name both in the Shetlands and Orkneys, where we meet with such examples as *Houlland*, *Haa-land*, the high farm, which is so common in Norway; further, *Littleland*, *Vatsland* (water), *Brantland*, *Hamarsland*, *Hogaland*, from *haug* or *hage* (hillock or garden), all of them names which are intelligible in Norwegian. In addition it is used in names of large districts which clearly have no connexion with farms. A classical example is *Fedeland* in the north-east part of Mainland. This name corresponds exactly and without re-composition to the Norwegian *Fedeland*, *Fidjeland*, from *fit*, which means fruitful and good land.

Through the *land* farms in the Shetlands we are brought into connexion with the second great wave of emigration from Norway. The geographical extent in Norway of the more than 2,000 known *land*-names demonstrates this. West Agder comes first with over 500, Rogaland next with over 400, then Hordaland with 300 and more, and East Agder with approximately 200. In West Agder, which is notorious for its *land* farms, they are most frequently situated in out-of-the-way places, such as the plateaux and valleys interspersed with innumerable small lakes which are such a feature of this rugged countryside. They are distinctly secondary in character, carved out of an older farm, probably in many cases a home farm. They are, especially in West Agder, primary evidence of a greatly increasing population during the fifth to eighth centuries. This was West Agder's prehistoric expansion.¹ Here was the source of the one of the two great waves of emigra-

¹ Helge Gjessing, 'Vest-Agder i forhistorisk tid', *In Vest-Agder*, edited by a committee, Bergen, 1925.

tion to Scotland. When this expansion of land had reached such a pitch that it covered both bog and ridge, it found a natural outlet to the Shetlands and Orkneys. It carried with it the old nomenclature and, since many places in the Shetlands greatly resembled the landscape of Agder, this was no more than natural. In common with *setr*, *land* also became a fundamental element in the construction of names long after the period of the early settlers.

In Laurensen's list (p. 72) the nominal series which comes after *set* is *gaard*. The meaning of the old Norse *garðr* is, in effect, an enclosed piece of ground, and this meaning is still retained in several parts of Shetland to-day. Not seldom is it found both in place-names and farm-names with prefixes of a definite character. Thus there is *Framgord*, the foremost farm, nearest the sea. *Gamlagord* is also to be found in the Shetlands. On Fetlar *Meiklegord* is the name of a district and seems to indicate that the name is an old one there. In other places *gaard* is not used as a farm-name but simply and solely to indicate cultivated land, e.g. *Sodra-gaard* (south) and *Vestrigaard*. Another branch of the word appears in the form of garth, *gerth*, and this is not rare in farm-names, *Bordigert*, *Evrigert* and *Estigert* (upper and uppermost); *Fogrigert* (the fair), *Hvennigert* (the mill), *Kjorkigert* (church, several examples). *Hwolgert* at Lunnister is not a farm-name but an enclosed piece of land on which cabbages are grown. *Linggert* is *lynggaarden*, the heather farm; *Muklegert*, the great farm. *Toptigert* is not a farm-name, but indicates places where old foundations have been discovered, undoubtedly relics of the Celts.

Finally, there is an ancient kindred form of name

which may often be confused with *gaard*. This is *gerði* (*gjerde*), a fence. There are cases where this is an element in farm-names, but as a rule it is descriptive of enclosed fields where linseed, cabbage, grain, and the like are cultivated.

The explanation of the origin in the Shetlands of this important *gaard* and *gjerde* series is plain enough. In those cases where they have reference to actual farms they have such prefixes as *fremste* (foremost), *övre* (upper), *söndre* (south), or *kvern* (mill), *kaal* (cabbage), *lyng* (heather), *korn* (grain), *lin* (linseed), *tufter* (foundations), and so on. In the Shetlands especially the method of farming calls for any number of enclosed fields where cultivated soil can be protected against the depredations of sheep, cattle, and horses out at pasture. From such enclosed lands new farms were created.

A further example of the same kind may be mentioned. The *quoi* of Shetland and Orkney, which is a corruption of the English pronunciation of the old Norwegian word *kvi*, meaning a fold, an enclosure for cattle, has the same meaning in the islands as *gaard* and *gerdi*. This is perceptible from such names as *Evrahwæi* (*övre*, upper), *Nordrahwæi* (*nord*, north), *Sondrehwæi* (*söndre*, south), and *Fogrehwæi* (*fagre*, fair).

Analogous to this is the Lowland Scotch *pund*, which came from the south in the early Middle Ages, and also means fold, an enclosure for cattle or for other purposes. In many parts of the Shetlands and Orkneys this word *pund* became part of actual farm-names.

The evidence which is here adduced is not claimed as complete. It is sufficient, however, to form a basis for conclusions regarding the inward connexion between the things in question. The Shetland-Orkney words

gaard, *gjerde*, *kvi*, and *pund*, in their capacity of elements in the names of farms, have, in reality, the same origin as *setr*, *land*, and *stadir* in Norway, even if this is somewhat more rigidly defined in the Shetland-Orkney elements. They referred originally to pieces of land of a definite character from which independent farms gradually evolved. Their development seems capable of expression in the following tabular form:

NORWAY.			ORKNEYS AND SHETLANDS.		
<i>boer bolstad heim</i>					
<i>setr</i>	<i>land</i>	<i>stadir</i>	<i>setr land</i>		
(Möre)	(Agder)	(SW. Norway)	<i>gaard</i>	<i>kvi</i>	<i>pund</i>
			<i>gjerde</i>		

Actually, of course, there is no development so simple and straightforward as this. The central point is, however, the historical development of agriculture which it indicates. The process of development whereby *gaard*, *kvi*, *pund*, and the like came to be included among farms belongs to the Shetlands and Orkneys, and is independent of Norway.

Leaving out certain other factors which are of no fundamental importance in this connexion, we can obtain a survey of the emigration. The emigration to the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Scotland owed its origin notably to two great main districts in Norway. The one was the coast district between Fjordene-Möre and Trøndelag (*set*, *bolsta*), the other, Agder-Rogaland, with its main centre in West Agder (*land*, *sta*). It is thus of the greatest interest and importance that, according to Magnus Olsen and Gjessing, it is these name-series of all others which reflect the great expansion in the fifth to eighth centuries. In other words, it is not

merely an interesting case of philological congruency which we find here, but the testimony of the chief name-series of the settlement in the Shetlands and Orkneys to great fluctuations in Norse civilization, one of the results of which was the exodus to the Scottish lands.

It is also of interest to note that the series which apply to the settlement in Scotland and the isles are other and different to those which later were given application in Iceland and the Faroes.

With the practice of the 'odel' system in the Shetlands and Orkneys the day was to come when the younger members of families were faced with the necessity of finding new ground. Not a few took part in the emigration to Iceland, but also in the islands old estates began to be divided on the basis of *kvi*, *gaard* and *gjerde*, and *pund*. In some such way as this the development must have proceeded.

The basic place-name elements which have been referred to are also to be found in Scottish territory outside the Shetlands and Orkneys, and wherever they occur they bear witness at least to a Norse settlement under circumstances similar to that in the Northern islands. The wave of emigration rolled far, but how far and in what manner is not relevant here. In Caithness more than half of the Norse place-names seem to be farm-names compounded with *ster* and *bister* (Brabster, Lybster, Nybster, Reaster, Scrabster, Sibster, Thuster), and this Norse nomenclature penetrates as far as Beaully. It is well known that Norse colonies were formed in Cumberland, Dumfries, Galloway, and Man, and Norse settlement reached far into England.

By means of these results we can not only discover

the district in Norway where the emigration had its starting-point, but we can discover its character. It was a movement of the peasant youth, and not the work of pirates or Vikings. These peasants from Möre, Rogaland, and Agder were not adventurers setting forth on a pleasure trip to Scotland. Rather they were, like the emigrants to America in our own times, men who for various reasons left their homes in order to carve out new positions for themselves in a far country.

The driving force behind them was naturally a complex of various reasons; first and foremost a hunger for land, but also lust of adventure, roaming instincts, and the hope of winning the great prize. Once started, this exodus across the North Sea could not be stopped.

Although we lack archaeological material from Scotland and its northern islands which might illuminate this emigration, it is possible that we, in Norway, as a result of the investigations of recent years, can produce archaeological material which tends to deepen our conclusions and confirm their accuracy.

The investigations in question are those of the past ten years in regard to old house foundations in Agder and Rogaland, which were more systematically commenced by Helge Gjessing in 1917, and which since 1923 have been carried on according to plan by Jan Petersen. In contradistinction to the many small houses on one farm in the Middle Ages and Viking Age the foundations here in question are those of isolated and, in some cases, very large long buildings, whose ruins in the form of earth-mounds rise above the surrounding soil and reveal the form of the ancient house. Upon investigation it has been proved that they are the ruins of farms of the migratory period of the fifth to eighth

centuries, and that they often have as their neighbours grave-mounds of the same period.

It is very probable that such large foundations exist in many parts of Norway, but it cannot be a mere accident that they are concentrated in Agder-Rogaland-Karmøy. There is also another remarkable characteristic of the majority of them, that they now lie in places which are not cultivated but which are now regarded as heaths or hill pastures. In the days when these houses stood there it must have been otherwise.

At Lista altogether four such houses have been investigated, in length 15–25 metres, often divided into several rooms. Many objects found in them tell of the life of the place. The most fruitful districts for these investigations have proved to be Bjerkreim, Dalane, and the Jæder. Here there has even been found a ruin of more than 50 metres in length divided into four rooms, and a quantity of clay vessels, crushing-stones for grain, spindle-whorls, weaving implements, glass, and vessels of many kinds. Equally remarkable discoveries have also been made on Karmøy, north of Stavanger.

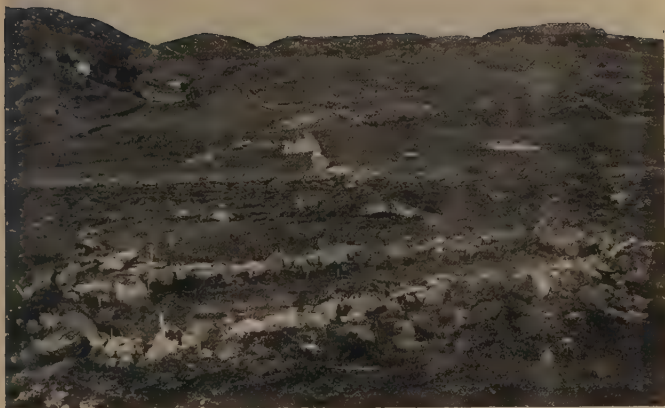
It is not the houses themselves and the life of which they speak which we are to consider: we are here concerned with their situation. The point can best be expressed by quoting the words of Dr. Petersen in a recently published book on Lista, where, among other things, he deals with the striking fact that many of the old farms revealed by these foundations are situated in areas which are no longer cultivated or populated.¹

‘What happened’, he asks, ‘to cause the desertion of these farms and the later appearance of new names, and when did it

¹ A. Berge, *Lista, en bygdebok*, Tønsberg, 1926.

happen? We know very little, and are upon highly uncertain ground when we try to give an explanation. I will only recall the fact that in Dalane, furthest to the south, and also in other areas of Rogaland, there are several places upon the heaths where there are one or two ruins and a small collection of grave-mounds. The objects found there have been proved to be no later than the migratory period. These places still have names which also point to the fact that at one time there were farms there, although the ground is not now built on. There are such names as *Haaland*, *Birkeland*, *Kraageland*, *Hovland* and others, almost *exclusively land-names*, the place-name group of the migratory period. This seems to indicate the presence of a settlement perhaps earlier in origin, but, in any case, existent in the migratory period; but at the end of this period, or rather in the beginning of the next, the seventh and eighth centuries, it was deserted. No new people came later, as must have been the case on the heaths of Lista; hence the old names of the migratory period still remain. There is, however, *one* such place also in Lista, Klevelandsheien, in Kalleberg. Here are a house-foundation and a number of grave-mounds. Here at one time lay a farm, Kleveland, which has never later been inhabited. What was it that happened in Dalane, Rogaland, and Lista and undoubtedly many other places in South-West Norway at this time? We do not know.'

It is not difficult to answer this question if we reflect on the main argument of the present lecture. Knowing, as we do, that in the eighth and ninth centuries a great wave of emigration went from Agder-Rogaland to the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Scotland, and that it was the families of the *land*-estates which formed the backbone of this emigration, this evidence from ancient farm-sites comes to us merely as a natural continuation of the history of the emigration. In numbers of these ruins of deserted *land*-farms, now being excavated, we must see relics of peasant families which once, long ago, crossed the North Sea and settled upon the mainland and islands of Scotland. By combining these various strands of evidence, we can not only see some explana-



Excavation of one of the ancient dwelling-places with foundations of houses, probably dating from 7th-8th century. Penne, Vanse, Lista



Excavation of another house at the same site

tion of the emigration but we can also see why these farms were deserted, a fact implying the emigration of the whole family, not only some of its younger members.

An obvious analogy to this is to be found in certain extreme phenomena of the emigration to America in our own times from very confined and remote districts, where the farmhouse itself is left with windows nailed up and doors locked, there to remain until ruin and desolation spread over the little house and claim it as their own; the same fate which befell the old country farms on the heaths of Jæren.

It may readily be granted that our investigations as yet are only in their initial stages, and that much must be modified. There is the possibility that we may be able to forge a new link in the chain of evidence if it should prove correct that, by means of the preliminary investigations of last summer, we have found ruins of houses in the Shetlands of exactly the same type as those of Jæren, namely, those at Bressay near Lerwick. This, however, can only be decided by excavation.

The fragments of the life of olden times which it has been my endeavour to present here, in the form of farm-names and ruins of houses with their tales of life and toil, are evidence to which we shall continually return in our efforts to obtain fresh knowledge of the ancient connexions between Scotland and Norway.

IV

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMARKS

THE scope of our study has hitherto been limited to geographical, historical, and linguistic facts, and archaeological questions have received but scanty attention. In the meantime it is only natural that we should inquire whether there are to be found remains of the Norse Settlement in Scotland and the islands, in the form of grave-mounds or other grave-relics, houses and farms, implements of daily use, weapons, or ornaments.

The opinion is very commonly expressed that the existing material of this kind is not in reasonable proportion to the colonization of these islands by the Norsemen. Now, we have a good analogy to this in the ratio between the Celtic brochs and the archaeological material belonging to them. It is scanty and intermittent, and in any case is marked by a total absence of weapons and implements characteristic of a higher civilization; yet we are not justified in concluding that the population was a poor one.

This is one of the vital questions in modern archaeological research, which must take a foremost place in discussion: the question whether an abundance of archaeological material from a given period indicates an age richer in a civilized sense than another from which the archaeological material, for one reason or another, is poor or totally absent. As a general rule we may take it for granted that a full and comprehensive material belonging to a certain period implies an age of progress or relatively high civilization. It does not follow, however, that the opposite is the case. The



great wealth of archaeological material from the Viking Age undoubtedly indicates a period of power; but although, for example, we can scarcely point to a sword, a spear, or an axe of the broch period in the Scottish isles, or any daily implements of the people, this does not mean that the population lacked these articles. We have accustomed ourselves to believe that the heathen grave-mounds of the Viking Age are always rich in archaeological material. In reality this is an erroneous belief. In the meantime it will be the object of this lecture to seek to prove that the archaeological material available from the Norse Settlement in Scotland is quite under-estimated, and that it contains matter of important original interest.

In the first place, how long did heathendom retain its hold upon the Norse colonists of the islands? From history we can see that in the southern districts, in the Hebrides and in Ireland, the Norse settlers came early under strong Christianizing influence from the nearness of the Irish Church. Already in the ninth century not a few of the Norsemen in the islands had been baptized, and many of these carried this primitive 'Christianity' to Iceland before the year 900 and built churches there (Ørlaug). Even if the strength of this Christianity dwindles as we go farther north, it can still be inferred that the very 'atmosphere' of western Europe had helped to weaken the heathen custom of burial with the invariable custom of luxurious equipment for the dead. Officially, Christianity was first accepted in the islands at the end of the tenth century, and until that time the Norse settlers were undoubtedly, in a sense, heathen. The continual contact with Christians and Christian districts, however, and the proselytizing

activities of the Church, must have gradually brought about a relaxation of the old customs. The official date of the adoption of Christianity in the islands does not mean that Christian influence was not at work there long before that time.

We must, therefore, ask ourselves whether, on the whole, there is any trace of the old Norse heathendom among the early settlers in Scotland and the islands. The only field, apart from grave-relics, where we should be able to find this is among the place-names. The result of research in this direction is in many respects negative, but certain conclusions emerge.

So far as can now be determined from the Norse place-names in Scotland, no names of heathen gods are preserved. No place-name seems to cherish a memory of *Frøy*, *Njord*, *Ull*, nor of the ancient supreme gods *Odin*¹ and *Thor*. An exception is claimed in the case of *Thurso*, which is thought to be a form of the old *Thórs-á*; but even if this were correct, it tells nothing, inasmuch as a river-name embodying the names of the god Thor is quite meaningless. The correct interpretation is more probably *Thjórsá*, the ox-river, which is intelligible.

There is, however, a very important witness to Norse heathendom in the Scottish isles in the form of place-names which contain the heathen *hov*, the temple, the place where the worship of the gods took place. In Shetland the single word *hov* is to be found at various places, while the genuinely Norwegian farm-name

¹ From the nineteenth century or perhaps even earlier there is mention of one of the great standing stones, at Stenness in the Orkneys, which is called the *sten o' Odin*, and this is its name at the present day. This name is quite certainly a literary creation of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

Hovland in various corrupted forms is known on Fetlar and other places in the Shetlands, and undoubtedly also in the Orkneys. The old heathen religion was in a number of places in Norway connected with a similar Hovland, which must not be understood as land attached to a heathen temple, but quite simply as the holy place, the 'church' place in a heathen sense. Where there is a Hovland there must have existed a *hov*. This *hov* custom, which was one of the central facts in the later heathenism, was also carried over to the Shetlands and Orkneys, just as it certainly was to Iceland, from whence we know it in all its details. On the other hand, it cannot be proved that the ancient *horg*, which in Iceland attained such great importance in the more private worship of the gods, was introduced into Scotland.¹

It is probable that the old division of Scotland into *tings*—a division of which traces can also be found in the Orkneys—hides an old characteristic of the early settlement, where the basis was a chieftaincy bound up with the religious state of the old heathendom itself.

Still one more place-name can be pointed out, at any rate in the Shetlands, which has preserved something of heathendom. This is the *Helgebostad*, already mentioned, *Heglibister*, the holy farm, even though this is of secondary importance to Hovland.

Now it is another question whether the emigrants, purely as a matter of organization, took as their basis the institutions of the old heathendom with chieftain,

¹ An important exception is mentioned by Hugh Marwick in a place-name from North Ronaldsay, Orkney, called *Hargar*, now forgotten but frequently appearing in records. It must be the plural of *horg*. *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. i, p. 53.

hov and *ting*. It would be a matter of course that they should do so; but it does not follow from this that the heathen custom of burial actually continued to be the same in the settlements as at home in Norway.

Since we consider it to have been proved that the great waves of emigration commenced in Agder-Rogaland and Möre, it will be of interest to know something of the appearance of the archaeological monuments and the burial customs in these districts during the eighth century and onwards. Conditions in West Agder, from which so many peasant families emigrated to the Shetlands and Orkneys about the year 800, are very clear in these respects. Whereas from this district there is a numerous, and to some extent rich, archaeological collection belonging to the fifth and sixth centuries, the yields in respect of the seventh and eighth centuries and the Viking Age, ninth and tenth centuries, are very poor. This is, perhaps, not so much on account of economic conditions as owing to an alteration in the burial customs. There may also be an inward connexion between these two factors. From the whole of West Agder no more than eight or ten finds are known from the seventh and eighth centuries,¹ and this figure is negligible in comparison to the hundreds from the fifth and sixth centuries, which are known partly from grave-mounds and partly from graves without any mound. They contain a higher percentage of weapons and iron implements than formerly. There is another fact in this connexion which is very important and must be emphasized. In West Agder, even large grave-mounds which must date from the eighth or ninth century often prove on investigation to be absolutely empty. We can men-

¹ H. Gjessing, *Vest-Agder i forhistorisk tid*, p. 56.

tion classical examples in the shape of the great grave-mounds which Lorange excavated at Snartemo in Hægebostad, and in the several empty mounds which were excavated at Stallemo in Øvrebö. They plainly point to the introduction of a new custom.

The case is somewhat different in Rogaland and farther north in the western part of the country. In some districts very rich finds have even been made of seventh and eighth century material, while in others the yield has been poor, and empty mounds have been found as in West Agder. One important class of object, the single-edged iron sword, which is characteristic of the seventh and eighth centuries, is specially representative of the districts Rogaland—Möre, as the following table shows:

West Agder	6
Rogaland	30
Hordaland	27
Sogn and Fjordane	25
Möre	18
Trøndelag—North Norway	45
Total	151

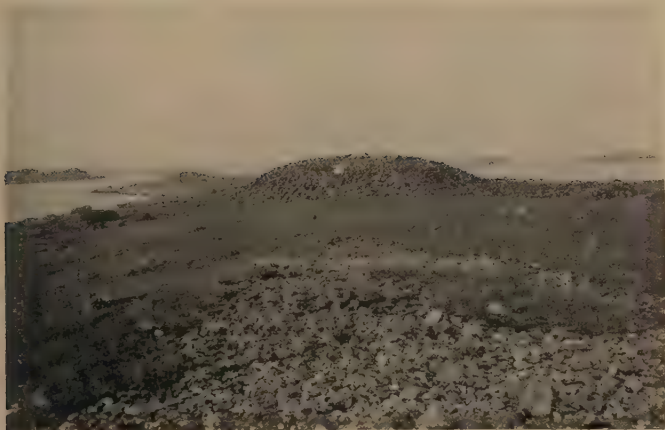
out of a total figure of 226 for the whole of Norway.¹

In the meantime these observations lead to a more careful discrimination of a geographical and historical kind which is emphasized by the material from the house foundations. If we look at the outlying districts where lie the deserted ninth-century farms which we consider in part to have belonged to the emigrants, we find there, in the immediate neighbourhood of the

¹ Sigurd Grieg, 'Merovingisk og Norsk', *Oslo Videnskapsselskaps Skrifter*, 1922, No. 9. See also H. Shetelig, *Vestlandske graver fra jernalderen*, Bergen, 1912.



Hill of Olligarth, Mainland, Shetland



Bronze Age 'Röis' (stone construction). East-Agder, Norway

foundations, grave-mounds, one or more, belonging to the farm (Lyngaland, Litleland, &c.). Investigations have proved that these mounds are empty, or at any rate the finds are scanty.

Finally, it must also be emphasized that in the eighth and ninth centuries the west of Norway shows, on the whole, a weaker tendency in the matter of grave-equipment than the richer eastern district. In the tenth century this is no longer the case, but by that time the settlers in the Scottish Isles were also less affected by conditions in Norway.

With these facts in view we must estimate the significance of archaeological evidence from the Shetlands, Orkneys, and mainland of Scotland. The age of heathendom in these places must be presumed, in the main, to spread over the whole of the ninth century, whereas the tendency towards Christian burial customs during the tenth century must have been increasingly stronger.

To obtain a survey of what we can learn of these matters in the Scottish Isles, it is necessary to see them in a wide perspective. We will therefore return to the question of the ancient monuments and constructions in the whole of the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Caithness. A summary survey is given in the following table:

	<i>Brochs</i>	<i>Cairns</i>	<i>Kumls</i>	<i>Tumuli</i>
Shetlands	75	50	90	100
Orkneys	75	10	?	200

It should specially be noted that these figures do not claim in any way to be exact or to be the result of systematic registration. They only serve to give a general idea of the ratio between the various groups of ancient monuments. They have been compiled from many and various sources. It must therefore be borne

in mind that only a proper archaeological survey can show their real significance, which must be based on a detailed consideration of the ratio between brochs, cairns, kumls, and tumuli. Both in local tradition and in the various surveys it is not seldom that these four classes are mixed together. Finally, it must be mentioned that where, for example, the Ordnance Survey's excellent maps give tumuli, kumls, or cairns, only actual inspection will reveal how many are to be found in each place.

What British archaeologists call a *cairn* is, in general, a *stenröis*, a stone construction of many different forms, with or without cists and chambers built of stone. Whereas, on the mainland of Scotland, at any rate in certain parts, they have yielded definite relics of the Bronze Age, not a single such find has ever been made in the Orkneys and Shetlands. In spite of this, they may almost certainly be ascribed to the Bronze Age.

While, according to the table, cairns are numerous in the Shetlands, they are, to judge from maps and descriptions, practically non-existent in the Orkneys. The explanation of this is certainly to be found in the proportion between the other classes of ancient monuments. According to the Ancient Monuments Commission's Register, 90 cairns have been noted in the Hebrides and 110 in Caithness.

An important contribution to the interpretation of the cairns is the manner in which they are placed on the ground. The author devoted some attention to this question during his expedition to the Shetlands last summer, and will mention some characteristic examples. On Unst there are several cairns at the summit of Saxavord (935 feet). Similarly, there are several at the top

of Norwickvard (about 600 feet). Other high hills on Unst have one or more such cairns: Crussafell, Muckle Heo, &c. In exactly the same manner on the other Shetland islands there are cairns on the tops of high knolls and ridges, or on the slopes of mountains, heights, and headlands. On Fetlar's highest ridge, Vardhill (522 feet), there are cairns. There are other cases where a cairn has been built on the top of an islet, such as the Heogland cairn in the most southerly part of Unst.

One cannot but be struck by a certain parallelism between this circumstance and the situation of the stone constructions of the Bronze Age in Norway. These Norwegian stone buildings are constructed in great numbers in exactly the same manner, on heights, ridges, and mountains, preferably with a view over the sea. Even though there may be no possible direct connexion between these two phenomena, the similarity is of considerable interest. Often in Norway we find many *röiser* collected together on a height, whereas in the Shetlands each group is limited to a few.

From the above survey it appears that, while in the Shetlands there are many cairns, in the Orkneys their number is negligible. In the Hebrides and Caithness again they are said to be numerous.

The explanation of this may, no doubt, lie to some extent in geographical dissimilarity; but in addition there is the fact that in the Orkneys the place of cairns is taken by a number of structures known as howes, knowes, tumuli, and mounds, all of them earth-mounds and not stone constructions. The earth-mounds of the Orkneys represent Bronze Age burials, whereas those of the Shetlands are represented by stone cairns. In order to justify this statement we need only refer to the

Orkneys' most classical sepulchral monument, Maeshowe, one of the most splendid monuments of the Stone-Bronze Age in northern Europe. Further proof can also be advanced. On the 300 feet high Vestrafjöld, north of the Bay of Skail, on the western side of the Orkneys, there are three small burial-mounds (called tumuli on the map) from which an extensive and imposing view can be obtained over the Atlantic. They correspond so completely to the cairns of the Shetlands that there is no doubt about their identity.

Kuml (Shetland pronunciation *komel*) is an old Norse name for a pile, a stone pile or an earth-mound or a similar monument. In the Shetlands they speak of a *stangkuml*, a kuml of earth, a *green kuml*, and so on, and the word is here found in the sense of a burial-mound, a grave-monument. 'The Kummels o' Korkigerth' are the graves in the churchyard. Bonjekuml is certainly a child's grave-mound.

This old word, which is found in the old Norse minstrel lays and in runic inscriptions, meant also, in the Viking Age, a grave-monument, either of earth or stone. In our day it has disappeared from the Norwegian language. Only in two places does it still live, in the Shetlands and Iceland. In the Orkneys, Caithness, and the Hebrides it no longer appears to be a living word.

In Shetland to-day there are about 90-100 such kumls, and perhaps more. By these are often meant stone-piles and earth-mounds. It seems, therefore, a natural conclusion that a number of these, perhaps the greater part, are indistinguishable from cairns. This seems to be demonstrated by the fact that many kumls are situated in exactly the manner which is character-



The finest Norse burial mound in Shetland.
Loch of Asta near Tingwall



View from the mound northwards towards the site
of the ancient Shetland-ting at Tingwall

istic of cairns, on the summits of hills and mountains or on the slopes of these. On Storbrough Hill in Walls (600 feet) there are several kumls. On Gulswick Hill (400 feet) there is at least one, on Ladie Hill (260 feet) there are two.

From the summer's investigations may be mentioned an example a kuml on Hill of Oligarth, Sandsting. It is a construction of boulders of 8-10 metres square, and in the middle lay two stones, remains of a burial chamber about 3·3 metres in length.

On Brunatvat in Walls there is a kuml, a flat construction of large stones, about 10 metres across. There is no traceable difference between this and a cairn. Many similar examples might be mentioned.

From the very cursory survey effected up to the present, the kumls are remarkably numerous in the north-western part of Mainland in the Shetlands, where they are most frequent in Aithsting and Sandsting. Neither on Unst, on Yell, nor on Fetlar are they to be found, but here they are undoubtedly replaced by the numerous cairns.

It is impossible to help seeing that, whereas cairns and kumls in the Shetlands are to be found to the number of 150, they are both represented by a negligible figure in the Orkneys. The explanation of this is undoubtedly the same as that given in the case of the cairns.

This discrimination is necessary in order to enable us to form a judgement upon the third group of ancient monuments, the most numerous of all, both in the Shetlands and Orkneys, those to which various descriptions are applied, tumuli, knowes, howes, mounds, giant graves, and many other names.

In the provisional investigations carried out in the

summer of 1928, the distribution of these tumuli soon proved of special interest. It has also proved that, in this connexion, the Orkneys and Shetlands offer differences which make it natural to deal with them individually.

The Shetland tumuli or earth-mounds differ sharply, both in appearance and in situation, from cairns, kumls, and the earth-mounds of the Bronze Age. After having seen about fifty of these, I venture to give a general characteristic of them. They nearly all stand by themselves, rarely two together. In exceptional cases we met with real burial-grounds with a greater or smaller number of mounds collected in one place. An average diameter of these mounds is about 10–12 metres, sometimes 15–16, and now and then, but very rarely, they were as much as 20 metres in diameter. The height, as a rule, is never more than 2 metres, and generally less. A surprising number of them were untouched and entire, with beautiful outlines. One of the most beautiful of all is the mound immediately south of the Astaloch on the road between Tingwall and Scalloway. Here, against the loch, it is beautifully outlined as it rises naturally from the ground. It is about 10 metres long from east to west, and proportionately high.

A little farther south, almost at Scalloway, in similar country, stands another fine burial-mound, 12–15 metres in diameter, which is known locally as 'Soldier's Knowe'. It has been excavated from the summit and has consequently that outline so familiar in many Norwegian burial-mounds, with a cup in the summit.

At Grista, immediately west of the old Tingwall, there are two burial-mounds, of which one seems to be untouched, nearly 13 metres in greatest diameter.

At Breibister in Walls there are also two apparently untouched grave-mounds.

In the vicinity of Burn of Setter in Walls stand three beautiful untouched grave-mounds, the largest being a long mound, 15 metres long by 8 metres wide.

At Huxter in Walls there are two burial-mounds (Muckle and Little Browns Knowe), the one, in spite of excavation, an imposing mound of 16 metres, offering a fine view over the Atlantic Ocean.

At Gruting in Walls there is perhaps the largest burial-mound in the Shetlands, no less than 20 metres in diameter, but unfortunately very much damaged.

At Heglibister in Sandsting there is a large, fine mound of 16 metres in diameter, quite untouched.

These are only a few examples chosen at random. A complete survey cannot be given here, but it may be mentioned that excellent examples have been seen at Bressay, in Dunrossness, on Whalsay, and in several other places.

In some individual cases it was possible to prove that the mound was built of poor, pebbly earth.

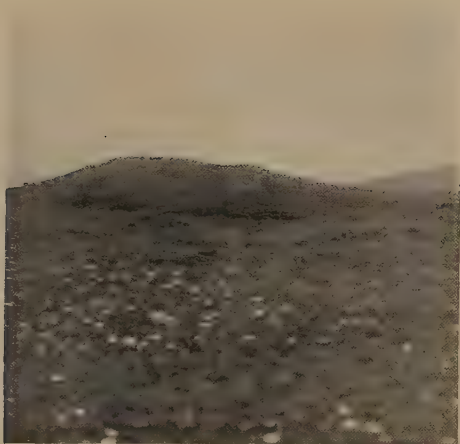
Perhaps their most important characteristic is their *situation*. In absolute contradistinction to kumls and cairns these burial-mounds are never found on summits or isolated heights. They are all situated near to the farm, on built-on or inhabited land, either in the home fields or the outer fields, and most often in the vicinity of a river, a brook, or a loch, or on a hill-crest in the immediate neighbourhood of the farm. This situation occurs regularly and cuts off these burial-mounds from all relationship to kumls and cairns.

In some places we established the existence of actual collections of graves of purely Norse character. As an

example may be mentioned a collection of five or six small trim mounds which stand in the fields within Aithsvaagen, Bressay, mounds of 6–8 metres, one of which was paved with a ring of irregular stones. It was exactly as if one stood before a small cluster of graves in Norway. At Huxter in Walls there is a series of eight small mounds of earth and stones. In other places were located collections of small, low, stone constructions mixed with earth, which presumably belong to the same category. One such collection was found at Setter in Walls, consisting of six very small structures, not more than 2 metres in diameter. At Finningarth, Walls, there is a small series of six. A remarkable collection is that of perhaps thirty low, small, stone constructions mixed with earth and about 4–5 metres in cross measurement, which are to be found at Claybottom, Walls. Here must also be mentioned, as a matter of interest, that near the ruins farthest inland, in Cullinsbro Bay on Bressay, which must be ancient house foundations like those in Agder and Rogaland, there were also several collections of small, stone constructions mixed with earth.

In a number of cases these burial-mounds are situated on farms of the oldest Norse name-types. In this connexion we may quote the mounds at Asta, Grista, Breibister, Setter, Huxter, Brouster, Heglibister, Beosetter. In the nature of the case, the importance of a connexion such as this is not always easy to estimate. Here, however, it seems perfectly clear. The close connexion between the farm and the mound must undoubtedly explain itself.

The natural conclusion appears to me to be that these grave-mounds in the Shetlands may possibly be monuments of the Norse colonization. This is borne out by



Burial mound at Cullinsbro, Bressay, Shetland



Burial mound at Quarsdale, Shetland, looking southwards to
Sandsound

the similarity of these mounds to those in Norway, both as regards appearance, dimensions, and situation in the immediate vicinity of the farm. I suggest that they may be the burial-mounds of the early settlers, of those who came from Agder-Rogaland and Möre, and who in the first, and perhaps also the second, generation followed the old native custom of raising grave-mounds to the departed members of their race.

The first thing which will be asked when this opinion is advanced is whether the archaeological finds in these Shetland grave-mounds confirm this. The answer, for the present, must be in the negative, inasmuch as no certain information as to finds in these mounds is forthcoming.¹ In reality, however, this is not conclusive. It has been mentioned that a number of them still seem

¹ The only person who has devoted any attention to these burial-mounds, the celebrated Gilbert Goudie, has adopted an attitude of doubt towards the question of the situation of these mounds. 'Artificial mounds', he says, 'are very common in Shetland. But though many have had the hands of the explorer laid upon them, scarcely any well-authenticated accounts of such investigations are on record. It may perhaps be pretty safely assumed that they are mainly sepulchral, either in the form of inhumation or cremation. But whether containing cists or chambers, or whether commemorating Pictish Chiefs or Viking Warriors, can only be determined by excavation and examination of their contents in each individual case, though my own opinion is that they are mostly of the earlier age and therefore rightly classed under the Celtic head of native antiquities.

'I have expended some labour and outlay on one mound, the *Bogie brae* or *Knowe of Willol*, near Clumlie in the Parish of Dunrossness. So far as my investigations went, only a cairn of burnt stones was encountered. Since that time the mound has been levelled to the surface for the purpose of roadmaking. But there is every probability that one or more cist burials may yet be discovered beneath the now exposed original surface.'

This excavation report does not point, however, to a pre-Norse mound.

to be untouched. In those which were damaged we saw the same marks of careless excavation which we know so well in Norway, and which in the majority of cases has not been pushed deep enough to find anything. Finally, it must be emphasized that it is very probable that these grave-mounds, if they are related to those mentioned in Agder, are 'empty', that is to say, the early settlers used the same custom which prevailed in Norway of not placing in the grave any equipment for the use of the dead. It must be presumed to be due to this burial custom that, even to-day, we do not know of a single iron axe in the Shetlands, a single weapon or implement belonging to the generations of early settlers. The very few antiquities which are known from the first Norse period, and which are mentioned more specially below, are, with few exceptions, not grave-discoveries.

The geographical distribution of these mounds in Shetland is remarkable. Most of those which are known are in Walls and Sandness. Subsequent investigation may change this, however. They are also found at other places in Mainland, several at Bressay and Whalsay, and are known in Foula, Fair Isle, Papa Stour, &c. On the other hand, they seem to be sparsely represented in the northern isles, Fetlar, Yell, and Unst.

When we pass from the Shetlands to the Orkneys, conditions become different. Even a cursory study of maps and descriptions makes it clear that the earth-mounds of the Orkneys are very numerous. It has always been thought that a great part of these mounds might be Norse, but this has been more a matter of feeling than of expert argument.

Captain Thomas, one of the first to describe and examine ancient monuments, estimated that there must

be at least 2,000 earth-mounds in the Orkneys. He divided them into two classes and gave it as his opinion that the 'bowl-shaped barrows' were Celtic, while the 'conoid-shaped barrows' were Norse. Such classification must, however, be regarded as unlikely. The well-known antiquary George Petrie saw this very clearly (1859) and emphasized the difficulty of differentiating between the Norse and the Celtic. 'Norse Barrows', he says, 'are comparatively few, and seem limited in the Mainland chiefly to the district of Sandwick. Norse graves are often found in the North Isles, but without barrows above them.' He points out, as an instance, with regard to the barrows near the standing stones of Stenness that 'some of them may be Norse, while others are of an earlier date'.¹

From the available material, which is mainly derived from chance discoveries, we must frankly admit that at present it is very difficult to determine how great a proportion of the many hundreds of tumuli, knowes, hillocks, mounds, barrows, &c., in the Orkneys owe their origin to the Norse Settlement. The position varies greatly in the different parts of the Orkneys. Most difficult to decide is the case of Mainland, where the Norse and Celtic in ancient monuments so closely resemble each other. It is otherwise on Sanday, where the Norse element seems more easily distinguishable. It is clear, however, that no final conclusion will be reached until scientific excavation on a large scale is commenced. This is the main question which claims

¹ 'Primeval Antiquities of Orkney', by the late George Petrie, Esq., *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. v (1926-7), p. 19. See also the important articles about Orkneyan antiquities by Hugh Marwick and John Fraser in *Proceedings, &c.*, vols. i-vi.

attention in the future. Meanwhile, a few details are available which at least give some idea how matters stand.

A number of the Orkney mounds have proved to contain cists. Where these cists have contained cremated burials the inference is clear. In these cases they are definitely and plainly pre-Norse graves, probably of the Bronze Age. In several cases it is mentioned that in the cists lay a holed stone hammer or stone axe. In many other cases reference is made to stone urns (steatite) in these cists. In these cases, too, there can be no doubt. Such cists must be pre-Norse, of the Bronze Age or perhaps a little later.

In the meantime it is certain that cist-graves from the Norse period are to be found in the Orkneys and in Caithness. With regard to these, however, it has not been finally established whether they have been found in mounds. They should therefore be classed by themselves and be dealt with separately.

The suggestion advanced by a number of students that some of the Orkneyan grave-mounds may be Norse is confirmed by objects found in them. One or two reliable examples may be mentioned. A grave at Lyking in the Orkneys, described by Professor Traill in 1870 as containing various grave-goods, was found in a tumulus, but a precise description of the objects is lacking. In a mound at Cairston, Stromness, locally known as 'the Hillock of Howe' (!) was found a linen-smother of black glass, a characteristic Viking ornament. In 1902 M. Charleson investigated a mound at Stenness and found, among other things, a ring-brooch of bronze. About the same time a tumulus was opened at Harray which contained a very good grave-find of the tenth century.



Oval and trefoil brooches (10th cent.) from Clibberswick,
Unst, Shetland

On Rousay a grave-mound at Swandrow was opened and found to contain an iron sword of the latter half of the tenth century. In this place several grave-mounds are said to have been discovered.

On Sanday a grave-find brought to light an iron sword of the tenth century from a tumulus at Styes. A couple of the grave-finds at Lambaness are also said to have been made in mounds.

In the descriptions of the interesting and important grave-finds at Pierowall on Westray it has once or twice been mentioned that they were made in hills or mounds. During my visit there last summer, when Commander R. Moe and I wandered over the links and up to Gill, no certain grave-mounds could be identified. The explanation of this appears to lie in natural conditions. Here there are great stretches of driven sand, where the country from time to time must necessarily change its configuration. Great, long sandbanks, which might appear to be burial-mounds, have perhaps originally been these, but have been deformed by sand drift. The eight Viking Age graves examined here by Rendall in 1849, to judge from the manner in which they were found, must all have been covered by artificial sand-mounds. Here, as well as on Sanday, however, it must be remembered that graves have also been situated under the flat surface.

The material mentioned is, it is true, not derived first-rate investigations, but it is still sufficient to prove that some of the Orkneyan tumuli date from the Norse Settlement.

Indirectly, this supposition is also favoured by the fact that such mounds are very rare on the mainland of Scotland, and, so far as can be discovered, are confined

to Caithness. Here they are stated, at Canisbay, to be 10-15 metres across, with a situation very like that of those in the Shetlands—in cultivated fields, on slopes, moorland, &c. In all there are to be found perhaps 20-30 in Caithness. In the Hebrides they are practically unknown; at any rate in the Outer Hebrides.

It is also worth while to mention the fact that several of the reliable grave-finds on the Inner Hebrides—Arran, Oronsay, Eigg, and Skye—have been made in undoubted mounds.

All things considered, the matter resolves itself into this, that the archaeological history of the Norse Settlement in Scotland can be written only after really systematic investigation in the future. What we can tell, up to the present, on the basis of archaeological finds themselves is purely and simply fragmentary; but it can no doubt give a glimpse into history.

Grave-finds ascribable with certainty to the Norse Settlement in Scotland are known from many scattered sources to the number of sixty. Their geographical distribution, which will be seen from the accompanying map, tells much. They are fairly sharply divided into two groups, according to natural boundaries. The one embraces Shetland, Orkney, and Caithness, with an extension along the east coast through Sutherland to Moray and Elgin. This group is the most numerous, embracing about forty grave-finds and a number of individual articles. On the whole these graves are poor and modest.

The other group comprehends the Inner Hebrides from Arran to Skye, and contains about eighteen grave-finds. In contradistinction to the first group, there are in this group several very rich and well-equipped graves,



THE DISTRIBUTION OF NORSE ANTIQUITIES FOUND IN
 SCOTLAND

such as that at Ballinaby on Islay, the Oronsay and Colonsay graves, and those on Eigg.

Finally, it is worthy of note that in the Outer Hebrides no more than four finds from the Norse period are known. We must presume that on the whole the Norse Settlement in the Outer Hebrides was much more populous than on the Inner. Since the archaeological material gives the exactly opposite impression, we are once again reminded how careful we must be not to draw conclusions from incomplete data.

A numerical comparison of known grave-finds is approximately as follows:

Shetland	.	.	.	.	2
Orkneys	.	.	.	.	30 plus cist graves
Caithness	.	.	.	.	6 plus cist graves
Sutherland-Elgin	.	.	.	.	2
				about	40
Arran-Bute	.	.	.	.	3
Gigha-Islay	.	.	.	.	5
Oronsay-Colonsay	.	.	.	.	5
Tiree	.	.	.	.	1
Eigg	.	.	.	.	3
Skye	.	.	.	.	1
				about	18
Barra	.	.	.	.	2
Eriskay	.	.	.	.	1
Lewis	.	.	.	.	1
				about	4

In addition there are some finds in Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Ayr, and other places, of which, perhaps, one or two may be grave-finds.

Thus, although the material is not particularly extensive, it will nevertheless be found sufficiently serviceable to establish individual historical facts.

The finds in the Shetlands are not numerous. There are only two which must undoubtedly be authentic grave-finds. At Clibberswick, in the most northern part of Unst, immediately north of Baltasund, some articles have been found which represent a woman's grave of the latter half of the tenth century, an oval brooch and a trefoil brooch of bronze, some glass beads, and a silver ring. The other find is also a woman's grave, an oval brooch, and a bronze article of the ninth century, but from which locality on Unst is not known.

The complete list of known Norse antiquities from *Shetland* is given below :

1. From a Viking grave in *Unst*, 1861. An oval bronze brooch. (O. Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, Oslo, 1885, fig. 647.) A small bronze ornament, perhaps a box for a pair of scales. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. 313-14.) Ninth century.

2. *Clibberswick, Unst*. Two oval bronze brooches. (Rygh, 654.) A trefoil bronze brooch and two glass beads. Said to have been found together with a silver ring. It is said that the objects were found by a person who was digging in the earth in a place often excavated. Possibly remains of a skeleton were traced also. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. 222-4.) Latter half of tenth century.

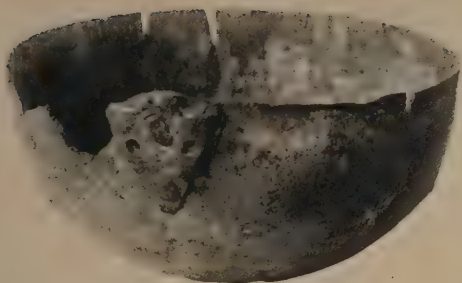
3. *Whalsay*. A small gold finger ring. Type like Rygh, 714. (Nat. Mus. Edinb.)

4. *Hillswick, Mainland*. In a moss here were found ten glass beads of different shapes, four of which were mosaic. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. F. J. 54-63.)

5. *Oxna, Burra*. Gold bracelet of plaited wire. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. F. J. 71.)

6. *Scalloway*. Large penannular silver brooch. Rygh, 680. (Property of J. Goudie.) Found in a moss between Lerwick and Scalloway. Tenth century.¹

¹ Jan Petersen, *Vikingetidens Smykker*, published by Stavanger Museum, 1928, p. 194.



Small hemispherical box of bronze found in a grave at Unst, Shetland



Oval brooch from the same grave

7. Garthsbanks, *Quendale*, mainland. In 1830 six or seven silver armlets were found at Garthsbanks along with a horn, full of Anglo-Saxon coins of Ethelred, Ethelstan, Eadgar. They were found in the ruins of a built structure, and with them were four or five broken stone basins or steatite pots. (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. x, p. 584.) Perhaps from this find are three ingots of silver, mentioned in *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 1892, p. 279. The hoard belongs to the tenth century.

8. At *Houndland* in Unst, found in a peat-bog, four steatite vessels, at one of the borders of the Loch of Cliff on a central part of the island. An extensive peat moss adjoins. The vessels (now in Nat. Mus. Edinb.) belong to a well-known Norwegian type, Rygh, 728, dating to the Viking Age or the Middle Ages. In this case they are no doubt evidence of commercial connexions with Norway, where similar vessels of steatite ('Klebersten') were made also for export. (Jan Petersen, 'Vikingetidsstudier', *Bergens Museums Aarbok*, 1920-1.)

9. Said to have been found in *Shetland*: a steatite spindle-whorl, bought at Stromness in Orkney. (*Proceedings*, &c., xxxii, p. 320.) It bears a runic inscription, part of which can be read; the words *reist runar* ('wrote runes') are certain.

The known finds in the Orkneys are, on the whole, relatively homogeneous. In a majority of cases the grave-goods are very few. Thus M. Charleson, on examination of one of the mounds at Stenness in 1902, found only one bronze ring-brooch, a very common form of Viking Age relic in the Orkneys. In a mound on the farm Howe (which means the mound, a very common farm-name in Norway also) near Stromness a linen-smoother of black glass (O. Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 446) was found and some other small articles. Of such things a fair number have been found in Scotland (10 or 12 are known), but it is not certain that all of

• them are of Viking origin, as linen-smoothers have been in use at many different periods. More rich in contents was a woman's grave in a mound at Harray : two oval brooches, amber bead, and bone arm-ring, dating from the tenth century. It is said that they were found together with burnt bones, but this may be doubted. In any case, all other graves of the Norse period are interment graves.

Orkney's mainland, however, at the present stage of our knowledge, is relatively poor in finds. The best material comes from Rousay, Sanday, and Westray.

At Sweindrow, near Westness on Rousay, an iron sword (ninth century) was found in one of the mounds which are said to have stood in the immediate vicinity of the shore. The grave in the mound was characterized by cist-like stone paving.

Sanday and Westray, the two northern islands of the Orkney group, with their extensive sand-dunes and low hills, which remind one of Jutland, have kept a number of mounds and howes, and in proportion to their size have produced the majority of the finds dating from the Norse Settlement period. On Sanday a number of these mounds still have names—Ivars Knowes, Agmunds-howe, and so on. Quite accidentally several finds have been made here. At Styes an iron sword and an iron cauldron were unearthed in a tumulus. Nothing is said with regard to the grave. This find belongs to the tenth century, and probably to its latter half.

At Lambaness, on the western part of Sanday, there must have been many burial-mounds. In one of these were found, in a woman's grave, two oval brooches, an amber bead, and a jet arm-ring, dating the grave to the tenth century. In a man's grave of the same period lay

a sword and a spear. Probably from this place come two oval brooches, two amber beads, and a blue glass bead found in the grave of a woman. The brooches in this case belong to a very early type of craftsmen's work in Norway, which goes back to about the year 800. In Lambaness we thus have graves of the first generation of early settlers. The farm to which they belonged was, in all probability, an ancient Haaland, and doubtless belonged to a family from Agder or Rogaland which had deserted a farm having the same type of name.

The richest and most interesting are the collection of graves on Westray, including a series of several hundred small and large mounds in the very small district between Pierowall Bay and towards the farm of Gill. Definite archaeological discoveries have been made here, but are unfortunately quite lost, and are only known from poor and incomplete descriptions.

The first information with regard to finds was from an excavation here in 1841 by Petrie in a sandhill at Gill. He found a man's skeleton and that of a horse in the grave, together with some iron rivets such as are familiar from the Norse ship burials.

In 1849 Rendall opened some of the graves in the sandy links at Pierowall. They were, perhaps, placed on the original surface of the ground, surrounded by roughly-made enclosures of stones and covered by a mound of greater or less bulk.¹ In the first of the four graves examined there lay a skeleton north and south, with a shield-boss and rivets. In grave No. 2 were found a spear, a shield-boss, a bit, and the skeletons of a horse and a dog. In grave No. 3 were an iron knife and a

¹ Joseph Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times, the Iron Age*, Edinburgh, 1883.

skeleton of a horse. In grave No. 4 there was only a human skeleton, and no goods.

The purely Norse character of these graves is borne out by the material obtained from later examinations, which, however, has been almost entirely lost. They were also carried out by Rendall, and comprised five grave-mounds lying north-east of the other four.

In grave No. 1 was found a cist built of large stones. In this lay a male skeleton with the head to the north, a shield-boss, a four-foot sword, a bone comb, a linen-smoother, and some beads. All have been lost.

Grave No. 2 contained a skeleton with the head to the south, two oval brooches, and a trefoil brooch. All the articles have been lost.

No. 3, like No. 2, was the grave of a woman. It contained two oval brooches and two large bone combs. The articles have been preserved (Lomberdale House, Derby), and show that the grave is of the ninth century.

Grave No. 5 was empty, and in grave No. 6 there were two oval brooches and a couple of long combs, all now lost.

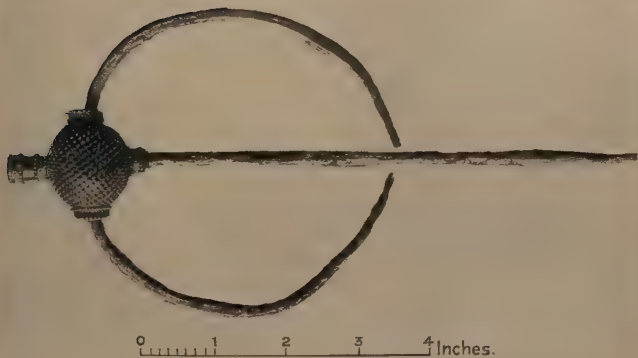
In 1851 Rendall opened another mound and found a grave containing an oval brooch, a bronze penannular brooch, a shield-boss, an iron axe, and a small spear-head. The goods are in Edinburgh, and prove that the grave belonged to the ninth century.

In 1855 Farrer opened a mound, a sandhill situated at Pierowall Bay. In this he found a considerable number of rivets, a shield-boss, a sickle blade, a knife, a key, all of iron, a decorated fitting of silver in Celtic style, and a bead.

From a grave-find at Pierowall there is also a sword with a spear, but the statements with regard to the find



Gold bracelet found on the island of Oxna,
Shetland



Silver brooch with pin from Scalloway, Shetland

have been lost. The sword is of a very early type, dating back to the eighth century. Probably this grave belongs to about the year 800.

Finally, there may be mentioned a find in this district during the year 1863, consisting of two iron buckles and a quantity of pieces of decayed wood, varying in thickness from 1 to 2 inches, pierced by iron rivets.

The whole of this collection of grave-finds, although badly recorded, throws an extremely clear light upon the phases of the first settlement. The earliest graves which can be dated go right back to the period about the year 800, and some of the others belong to the ninth century. In other words, it is the earliest generations of settlers which are before us, the first and second generations of those who populated the Orkney Islands. Pierowall is the *Hofn* of the Saga of the Orkneymen, 'the harbour' *par excellence*, the best and only real harbour in the Orkney Islands, with the old shipping life with its shallow boats. It is quite natural that this place became a centre. The graves show purely general characteristics of Norse burial customs of about the year 800 and later—the mound, the stone pavings around the grave, the simplicity and strongly traditional character of the grave-goods: a set of oval brooches in the woman's grave, a sword, a spear or a shield in the man's. Equally Norse are the rivets in the grave, which represent a boat, without its being certain that any real boat was put into the grave.

One feature which has been mentioned possibly shows connexion with a particular part of Norway, the cist-grave, a veritable stone coffin built of large stones. This form of grave was not so uncommon in the Norse Viking Age as is generally believed. In certain parts of

Norway the tradition of the early Iron Age, with its often magnificent large stone cists, was preserved through the eighth century and into the Viking Age. This may be seen especially in two areas: the coasts of Möre-Tröndelag and Nordland. Of the more than 100 late stone cists which are known in Norway the great majority are from these areas.¹ To use the same language which we used of the grave-groups on Sanday, we can here say that these Westray people, who have left behind them the graves at Pierowall, probably were emigrants from the coasts of Möre-Tröndelag.

Here may be mentioned another find, that at Skaill, on the western side of mainland. On the south side of this beautiful sandy bay, into which the waves of the Atlantic roll, close to the boat-house, there was opened in the eighties a small grave-mound in a sandy brae. In the mound lay a cist, N.W. by S.E., 1.80 metres long and 75 cm. wide, built of stone slabs. The western side was formed of one single large stone, the full length of the grave. The grave contained articles of very early date, a bone comb with case, a whetstone, a knife, an iron arrow-head, and a spearhead of a form which in Norway goes back to the seventh and eighth centuries. It cannot be denied that this find is an argument in favour of Norse settlement in the Orkneys in the eighth century. It has the early type of cist-building and in other ways is connected with early West Norwegian customs and form.

It is possible that we can here trace a further interesting development. It seems possible, at any rate, to piece together the data we have into a single whole. In

¹ O. Rygh, 'Om den yngre jernalder i Norge', *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed*, 1877, p. 149, Kjøbenhavn.

the Orkneys there certainly exist cists in mounds which must date from the Viking Age. They are as a rule empty, and cannot therefore be precisely dated. A classical example is the cist examined by Marwick at Isbister in Rendall.¹ Others are known from Grantit near Kirkwall, Scapa, and several other places.

Taking as his starting-point the discovery of some very remarkable cist-graves near Ackergill in Caithness, Arthur F. Edwards has been able to prove that such cists in mounds must have been very general in Caithness.² At Ackergill up to the present at least ten have been established, many at Watenan, and also many at Keiss. These cists, like those of the Orkneys, are empty. Only from a fortunate discovery which Edwards made, a bronze chain, have we obtained anything to go upon. This chain has a parallel in one found in a Norse grave of the tenth century in Hardanger (H. Shetelig). It must be considered probable that these graves, on the whole, belong to the tenth and perhaps the eleventh centuries. It may be too early to say anything with certainty in regard to these things, and the hypothesis I here advance is made with all possible reserve. I am inclined to believe that the interpretation which can best join these facts together is that these graves have no basis either in Norway or in the Baltic region. They are evidence of a colonization of Caithness from the Shetlands and Orkneys during the tenth century, the probability of which can be established from historical and archaeological data.

Even if the archaeological material from Caithness is

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1925-6, p. 178.

² *Proceedings, &c.*, 1925-6, p. 160, and 1926-7, p. 196.

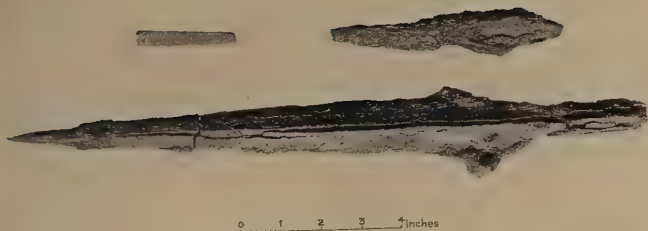
smaller in bulk than that from the Orkneys and Shetlands it already enables us to make one important observation. As in the Orkneys and Shetlands, our knowledge of it is based on accidental discoveries. Among the most instructive is that of two grave-finds in Reay, one in 1913 and the other in 1925.¹ The former was discovered through the wind blowing aside the loose sands upon the links, exposing a human skull. The depth of the grave was some four feet below the present surface-level. There were no signs of a cist. In the grave, that of a woman, were found two oval brooches, a ring-brooch and a small strap buckle, a spindle-whorl, and a bit. The brooches date the grave to the tenth century.

The other lay on sloping ground, not far from the north side of the Drill Hall at Reay, covered with sand-dunes which rise inland from Sandside Bay. It was partly exposed by the action of the wind. This is a situation which exactly corresponds to that with which we have become familiar on Sanday and Westray. The grave was about six feet below the level of the turf in the immediate vicinity. In this grave lay an iron axe, a shield-boss, an iron knife, a sickle, a bronze ring-brooch, a needle-sharpener of slate, and various pieces of iron, and probably a horse. It is the grave of a man of the tenth century.

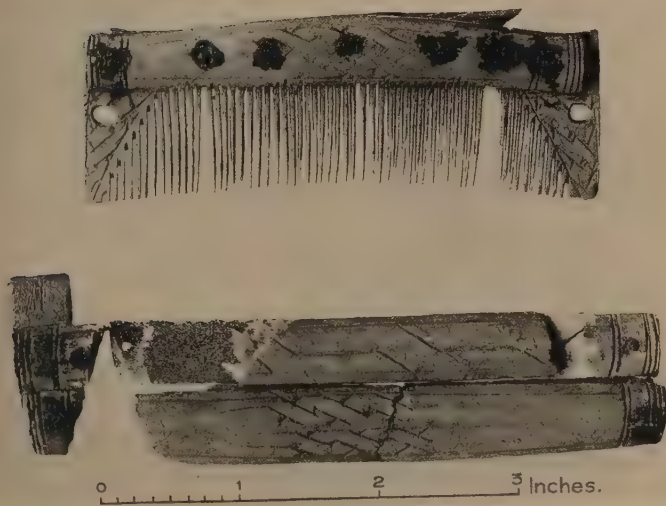
Further to the east, in North Caithness, there is a grave at Castletown on Dunnet Bay. Here were found two oval brooches, an arm-ring of jet, and a bone needle. The brooches are of a type which dates the grave to the tenth century.

In 1837 a stone cist was found in a gravel hillock

¹ James Curle in *Proceedings, &c.*, 1913-14, and Arthur F. Edwards in *Proceedings*, 1926-7, p. 202.



Knife, spearhead, and whetstone



Bone comb with case

ANTIQUITIES FROM SKAILL, ORKNEY

called the Longhills, a short distance below the broch of Kettleburn on the farm of Westerseat, near Wick. In this lay, among other things, two oval brooches of the tenth century.

To this group of tenth century finds in Caithness, with which cist-graves are plainly associated, must also be added the discoveries in Sutherland and the Elgin-Moray region.

Among the collections at Dunrobin Castle near Golspie are three grave-finds which show the same characteristic features. In one of them are a pair of tenth-century oval brooches; in another an axe, plough, smith's tongs, knife, and spearhead of iron. Finally, at Ospisdale in Dornoch was found an oval brooch of the tenth century. To these must be added at least one find in Elginshire, made during the construction of the railway in 1864: an iron sword of Norse type, assignable to the first half of the tenth century.

It cannot be a mere accident that so many graves—and up to the present no more are known—all belong to the tenth century, and that not a single ninth-century find has been made. The obvious explanation seems to be that we are here confronted with relics of a Norse settlement in Caithness which took place in the tenth century; but this settlement, to judge by an important feature of the antiquities, was not derived from Norway. The oval brooches in these finds, seven in all, undoubtedly belong to a main type which was created and developed in Norway, but show details which plainly indicate an Orkney and Shetland modification of the type. The conclusion can hardly be avoided that Caithness was invaded from the Shetlands and Orkneys in the tenth century, and that to this are due the numerous

place-names in Caithness which have Orkneyan elements (*bister, ster, sta, &c.*).

The southern limit of this settlement is Moray Firth. Chance finds in Elgin, on the well-known Culbin Sands, and at Burghead, seem to prove that the Orkneyan Norse penetrated thus far south, even in the tenth century.

As a significant historical delimitation of the archaeological material, we must here include a brief summarized account and interpretation of the material from West Scotland. Eighteen to twenty grave-finds are involved, and a few others which have been poorly recorded. In these we are confronted by quite other conditions, an entirely different key-note to that of the grave-finds in the Shetlands, Orkneys, Caithness, and Sutherland. The first difference which strikes one is in the dating. A majority of the finds are of the ninth century, a few go right back to the first half of the ninth century, such as the very important grave-find on Oronsay with an oval brooch of Oseberg style. The mound there contained three skeletons. It must be the grave of a family which had settled permanently on Oronsay already, about 820-30. Equally early are the two grave-finds at Barra, in the most southerly part of the Outer Hebrides. Many of the finds belong to the ninth century, but some also to the tenth, such as the rich graves at Ballinaby on Islay, the graves on Colonsay, on Eigg, and elsewhere.

It is not only the difference in time, however, which is immediately apparent. The majority of these finds present a far greater richness and variety of grave-goods than that which met us in the finds in the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Caithness. These finds comprise not only weapons of all kinds, including swords, spears,

axes, and shields, but also agricultural implements such as sickles, ploughs, and hoes, and other farming implements like hammers, tongs, axes, clippers, and iron cauldrons. It is exactly as if one were confronted with a Viking Age grave at Voss, Sunnfjord, Sogn, or Möre. It is an aristocratic class, consisting of isolated land-owners and traders—there are scales and weights among the grave-finds of Gigha and Colonsay—that has taken up permanent residence in the islands, from Arran to Skye, in the ninth century.

None of these finds shows traces of being filtered, so to speak, through the Orkneys and Shetlands. It was not a people from these northern isles who moved to the western isles of Scotland, but Norsemen who, as early as the first decades of the ninth century, settled on the Inner Hebrides: Norsemen from the upper strata of society, coming from the west country districts to find a home in a new country. It is a migration quite different in character from that which we have endeavoured to describe in the case of the Orkneys and Shetlands. It must be seen in conjunction with the Norse invasion of Ireland during the same period. It undoubtedly prepared the way for the emigration of a real element of great men from Norway who, according to historical evidence, left the country on account of King Harald the Fair-Haired's *ovrike* (oppression). History tells us of some of these great men. It is sufficient to mention Björn, 'the flat-nosed', from Sogn, whose descendants have left their mark in Caithness, the Orkneys, the Faroes, and Iceland.

Another observation of some importance may be added concerning the archaeological material. If we look at the two main types of object which repay study,

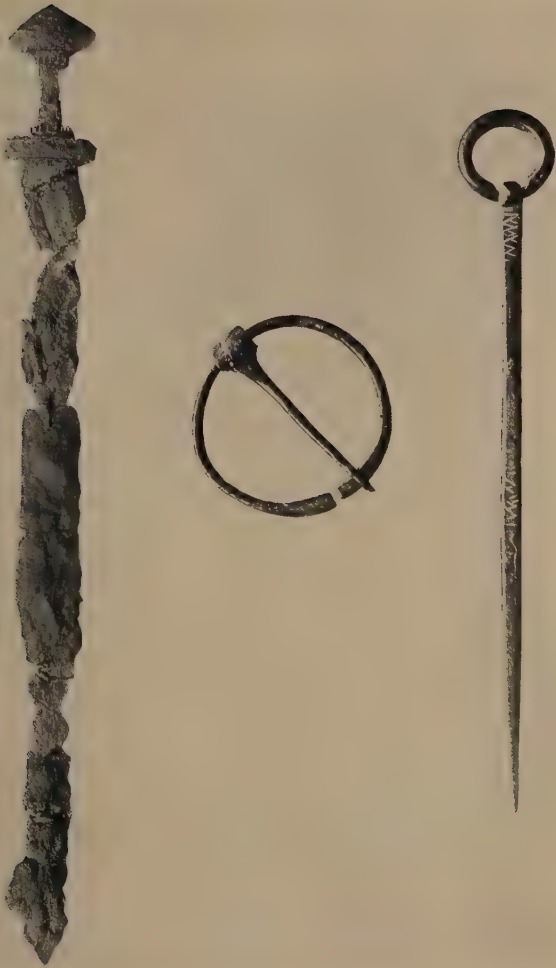
the oval bronze brooches and the iron swords, various important things can be read from them.

All the ninth-century oval brooches from the Scottish area are undoubtedly Norse. They were made in Norway, and came to the islands by way of regular purchase. We know of ten examples altogether, of which six are from the Orkneys; but in the whole of Norway considerably more than 400 are known.¹ In the tenth century, however, a change took place. The Orkneys and Shetlands developed variations of the main Norse type. The oval brooches of the type Rygh, 652-4, of which in Norway about 500 are known, have undoubtedly been fashioned on the farms of the Shetlands and Orkneys and have developed their own variation there. Thus, against a very prosaic background, there stands out a picture of a Shetland and Orkney type of civilization, admittedly sprung from Norse roots, but gradually becoming independent in its form—a Shetland and Orkney civilization, not a Norwegian.

It is otherwise with the iron swords. The material from Scotland is not extensive, but this at least is clear, that their forms, with one early exception, are wholly and entirely Norse. It is not possible to point to one single independent type. Further, it seems as if swords in the Shetlands and Orkneys, in contradistinction to Norway, were not commonly owned by all men, at least among the better class of peasants. As compared with about two thousand Norwegian iron swords of the ninth and tenth centuries,² there are at the outside

¹ Jan Petersen, *Vikingetidens Smykker*, Stavanger, 1928, p. 33. Mainly the types Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 647-9.

² Jan Petersen, *De norske vikingesverd*, ed. by Videnskapselskapet i Oslo, Skrifter, 1919, No. 1.



Iron sword from Sweindrow, Rousay, and penannular brooch
and bronze pin from Broch of Okstrow, Birsay, Orkney

a score from Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, and the Hebrides. This brings us to the obvious question whether the peasant civilization which developed in the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Caithness also developed the iron-working industry which, in Norway, played such a vital part in the development of the Norse civilization of the Viking period and the Middle Ages.

At the moment we have no material on which to base an answer to this important question. It must be one of the objects of Norwegian-Scotch archaeology in the near future to attack this basic historical problem.

It is the historical results based upon archaeological material which have been indicated here. It may be that the archaeological investigations of the future will deepen and perhaps change these results. For the present the hypotheses stated above seem to be those which best explain the complex of data in its entirety.

It may seem strange to devote energy and thought to such special and limited problems as those with which we have here dealt. In reality it is not solely for the value of the problems themselves, or the attraction they have for a Norwegian archaeologist, that they have been discussed. Regarded from a wider point of view, they have the importance that attaches to any problem arising out of the inquiry into the manner in which human beings of all ages move, and by their constant unrest create the ceaseless ebb and flow of history.

APPENDIX

A list of the known objects of Norse origin, dating from the ninth to eleventh centuries, from the Orkneys, Caithness, and the rest of the Scottish mainland.

ORKNEY

Mainland

1. *Caldale*, near Kirkwall. A number of penannular silver armlets were found here in 1774 along with a horn, containing about 300 silver coins of Canute. *Proceedings, &c.*, vol. x, p. 584.

2. *Sunnybanks*, St. Ola. A bronze ring brooch of peculiar form. (Hunt. Mus. Glasgow, C. 66.)

3. *Lyking*. Grave-find, 1870, Professor Traill. A piece of a bone comb, a small and simple iron spearhead, and an iron buckle. These were said to have been found together with burnt bones in a tumulus. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 211-13.) *Proceedings, &c.*, 1870-2, p. 4.

4. *Howe, Cairston*, Stromness. Linen smoother of glass, found along with other objects in a mound on the farm Howe, locally known as the hillock of Howe, never properly excavated. The mound is very prominently situated and is used as a sea-mark. (The linen smoother belongs to James G. Marwick.)

5. *Stenness*. In a tumulus examined by M. Charleson in 1902 was found a bronze ring brooch with a skeleton. (*Saga-Book of the Viking Club*, vol. iv, pp. 95 f.)

6. *Stenness*. In one of the mounds near the circle of Stenness were found nine silver fibulae of horseshoe shape, but round. The objects have been lost. *Proceedings, &c.*, vol. x, p. 584.

7. *Stenness*. Four gold bracelets, also finger rings, belonging to the types Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, 714 and 724. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., F.E. 27-30.)

8. *Harray*. In a tumulus excavated by some person about 1900-5 were found two oval brooches of bronze (Rygh, 654), a fragment of a bronze pin, an amber bead, and an armlet of bone. The objects are said to have been found together with burnt bones. (*Saga-Book*, iv, p. 85.) The find dates to the tenth century.

9. *Skaill*. Grave-find from a cist, NW.-SE., about 5 feet long, 2 feet 2 inches wide, and 2 feet deep. The south-western side built of one single large slab the full length of the cist. In the cist were found a bone comb with case, a whetstone of black slate, an iron knife, an iron nail and arrowhead, an iron spear-head, cp. *Aarsberetning* (Norway), 1898, p. 72, fig. 1, certainly from the eighth century. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 230-5.) *Proceedings*, xxii, 1887-8, p. 283. There were also a rough stone disk, bones of horse and bird. The grave was situated in a sandy brae close to the bay of Skaill.

10. *Skaill*. Large and important hoard of silver ornaments, ingots, coins, &c., upwards of 16 lb. weight, found in a sand-hill at the burn of Rin. Dating from the latter half of the tenth century. See *Proceedings*, &c., 1872-4, p. 575; 1880-1, p. 286; and *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1892, p. 269.

From Mainland also are known two bronze ring brooches, one found at the Earl's Palace at Birsay, the other in the Broch of Okstrow. Combs of Norse type are also found in the Earl's Bu at Orphir.

Burray

11. *Burray*. A large silver hoard with bracelets, &c. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 436-71.) See *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, ed. 1892, p. 280.

Rousay

12. *Sweindrow* (the name possibly derivated from the famous Svein Asleifsson). In one of the mounds, of which several were set with stones standing on edge, was found an iron sword, cp. Jan Petersen, *De norske Vikingesverd*, fig. 82, dating from the latter half of the ninth century. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. J. L. 191.) See also Joseph Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan times, Iron Age*, p. 45.

13. *Sweindrow*. A fragment of a shield-boss, like Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, 565. In Barry, *History of Orkney*, Kirkwall edition, 1867, p. 64, it is said to have been found on a plain on the shore, about a quarter of a mile to the west of Westnes in

Rousay, which has on it immense piles of stones, evidently ruins of some ancient structures around which are to be seen graves, formed with stones set on edge, as in some other places. It is said that the shield-boss was not found with the sword.

Sanday

14. *Lambaness*. In digging in the ruins of an ancient structure were found a portion of the hilt-end of an iron sword, cp. Jan Petersen, *De norske Vikingsverd*, fig. 87 or 89, belonging to the latter half of the ninth century, a portion of an iron spear-head, and an iron axe. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. 179-81.) *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, ed. 1892, p. 275.

15. *Styes*. In a tumulus was found an iron sword, Jan Petersen, *De norske Vikingsverd*, fig. 128, belonging to the first half of the tenth century. (Hunt. Mus., Glasgow, C. 60.) *Proceedings, &c.*, vol. x, 566.

16. *Sanday*. Oval brooch, Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 648, two small beads of amber and one of blue glass. The brooch dates the grave-find to the first half of the ninth century. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. 343-6.) *Proceedings, &c.*, 1914-15, p. 14.

17. *Sanday*. Two oval brooches, Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 647, dating the grave to the latter half of the ninth century, Jan Petersen, *Vikingetidens Smykker*, p. 33. A jet armlet and an amber bead. (Nat. Mus. Edinb. 347-50.) *Proceedings, &c.*, 1914-15, p. 15.

There is no information about the circumstances under which these two graves were found.

Portion of a bronze ring brooch (in Nat. Mus. Edinb.) found in a broch at Lambaness, perhaps found with an iron axe, exhibited by J. Cursiter at Glasgow in 1911.

From Sanday, unknown locality, is also preserved in the Free Library Museum, Kirkwall, a long comb of bone, like Rygh, 447, said to have been found in a 'kitchen-midden'.

Westray

18. *Gill*. Bronze check-ring of bridle and iron rivets, found in a sandhill by G. Petrie, 1841, with skeletons of a man and



Iron sword from Styes, Sanday, and portion of hilt-end of iron sword, and iron spearhead from Lambaness, Sanday

a horse. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 193-4.) *Proceedings*, &c., 1862-4, p. 16, and 1879-80, p. 79.

19-25. *Pierowall*. Grave-finds, excavated by William Rendall, mentioned above p. 119. *Proceedings*, &c., 1879-80, p. 85. Antiquities being lost.

26. *Pierowall*. Two oval brooches and two large combs of bone or horn, preserved at Mr. Bateman's, Lomberdale House, Derby. *Proceedings*, &c., vol. x, 552.

27. *Links of Pierowall*. Oval brooch, Rygh, 647, belonging to the ninth century, penannular bronze brooch, Rygh, 697, shield-boss, axe, and spearhead, all of iron. Rendall, 1851. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 197-201.)

28. *The Links of Pierowall*. Small iron sickle, iron key, pierced at top, iron knife, gilt bronze knob of sheath with ornaments in Celtic style, small bead of clay, pieces of iron and wood. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 182-9.) Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times, Iron Age*, p. 58. Excavated by Farrar in 1855.

29. *Pierowall*. Iron sword, cp. Jan Petersen, *De norske Vikingesverd*, fig. 69, dating from the first part of the ninth century. Iron spearhead, imperfect. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 195-6.)

30. *Pierowall*. 'Ship-burial' with a collection of iron rivets, portions of wood, two iron buckles. Bones of leg of horse. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 202-8.) *Proceedings*, &c., 1879-80, p. 79.

Probably from Orkney is a bronze penannular brooch in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, and some iron fragments in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. (C. 51, j. 82-7.)

In Perth. Nat. Hist. Museum there are two oval brooches, Rygh, 640, possibly from Orkney or Western Isles.

CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND

31-2. The two grave-finds from Reay, mentioned above, p. 124, both dating from the tenth century.

33. *Castletown*, Dunnet Bay. In 1786, found at the top of some ruined construction, two oval brooches, Rygh, *Norske*

Oldsager, 655, dating from the latter half of the tenth century, an armlet of jet and a bone needle. (Nat. Mus. Edinb., I.L. 221.)

34. *Watenan*, *Ackergill*, and *Keiss*, a number of cist-graves, dating from the tenth and probably also from the eleventh century, mentioned above, p. 123.

35. *Longhills*, by Wick. In a stone cist, excavated in a gravel hillock, called the Longhills, a short distance below the broch of Kettleburn on the farm of Westerseat, were found in 1837 two oval brooches (Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 652 and 654) dating from the tenth century. (Nat. Mus. Edinb.)

36. At Dunrobin Castle, Golspie, are preserved two oval brooches, Rygh, fig. 652, dating from the tenth century, and said to have been found in a grave in the neighbourhood.

37. In the same place are also preserved an iron axe (Rygh, *Norske Oldsager*, fig. 560), a small iron ring, a ploughshare of iron, a pair of iron tongs, and a one-edged sword or knife of iron. All from the neighbourhood of Golspie.

38. *Ospisdale*, by Dornoch. An oval brooch, Rygh, fig. 652 (tenth century). Dunrobin Castle.

39. Near *Perth* was found an oval brooch, Rygh, fig. 652-4, dating from the tenth century.

40. *Strathspey*, near Gorton, Elgin. Men constructing the railway here in 1864 found an iron sword, cp. Jan Petersen, *De norske Vikingesverd*, fig. 109, dating from the tenth century.

41. Joseph Anderson, *Relics*, p. 54, reproduces a mounting of silver for a drinking-horn, probably dating from the tenth to the eleventh century, found at Burghead, Elgin.

The list has been prepared from the inventory made in 1925 by Sigurd Grieg, Ph.D.

The antiquities from the rest of the Scottish Mainland and from the Hebrides will be examined by Professor Shetelig in connexion with a treatment of the Norse settlements of Ireland, England, and France.

THE EARL AND THE BISHOP

Med logum skal land byggja.—Shetland Law Book

THE peasant¹ families which took up land in the Shetlands and Orkneys came to countries where no foreign law or social order existed to hamper the introduction of their own. Even if about A.D. 800 scattered communities of Celts were still to be found, they entirely lacked the protection of a strong sovereignty or kingdom.

In indirect ways we can form an approximate estimate of the footing on which the emigrants stood, their view of law and justice, and their mutual relations in their little new communities.

In the remote past, all land in Norway had been Odel, bound up with the possessions of the family. There was a time when the family was strictly the owner of the land. From this developed the law of Odel—that is to say, the prior right of the members of the family to

¹ In reading this and the next chapter it must be borne in mind that the English word 'peasant' does not precisely correspond in meaning to the Norwegian term. On p. 7 of his *Church and State in Norway*, the Rev. Thomas B. Willson says: 'It is difficult to find an English word which will accurately render the meaning of the word *bonde*, the sing. of *bønder*. To translate it, as some have done, by the word peasant conveys an entirely incorrect meaning. The Norwegian *bonde* was a free man, dwelling on his own land, having no lord over him to whom he was under any of the obligations of feudalism. His obligations were to defend the country when attacked, and to contribute to the support of the *Høv*. His tenure of land was called *Odel* and any attempts to interfere with it met with the strongest opposition.'

Accordingly we shall use in these two chapters the Norwegian word *bonde* (plur. *bønder*) to signify the free owner of land both in the Scottish isles and in Norway.



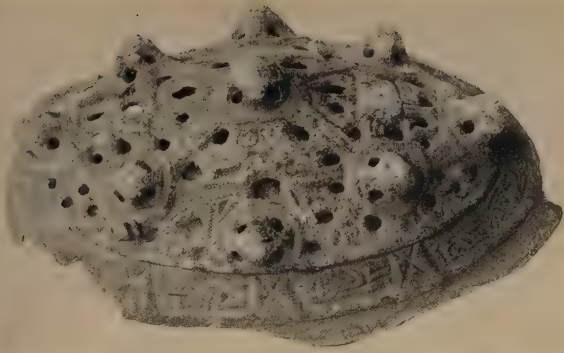
purchase and redeem land which had been sold out of the family. So defined, Odel no longer means communal ownership by the family, but shows traces of this former meaning, while in point of fact it assumes the direct contrary of family ownership, the individual ownership of land.¹

According to the Frostatings law a farm in Norway became Odel land after the fourth generation. The Gula-tings law was even more stringent; it required five ancestors in direct descent in order to enable the sixth to claim the land as his own by right of Odel. This strict limitation was one of the greatest sources of controversy in the social politics of medieval Norway. The result was Magnus Lagaböter's modification of the law in the thirteenth century, whereby the period of limitation was fixed at 60 years: the great land reform which, among other things, has promoted the cultivation of the soil in Norway.

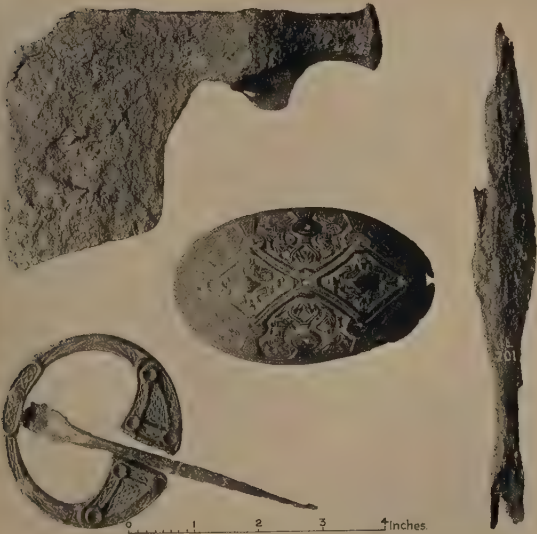
The most important expression of the Law of Odel is its law of inheritance. The real estate of an Odelsbonde became on his decease equally divisible amongst all his family. The only privilege accorded to seniority was that the eldest son could claim the chief manor or farm and finally hold the Odel right, the right of redeeming land sold for the members of the family, within a certain period, at the sale price, irrespective of changes in the value of money. This is called 'taking over the farm again in Odel'.

From a west European point of view this system is very strange. When Tudor came into contact with it through the old literature upon the Orkneys and Shet-

¹ A. Taranger, *Utsikt over den norske retts historie*, ii. 19, Oslo, 1898. E. Hertzberg, *Glossar til Norges gamle love*, Oslo, 1895.



Brooch from Sanday, Orkney



Axe, oval brooch, penannular brooch and spearhead from
a grave at Pierowall, Westray, Orkney

lands, he stated¹ as his opinion that 'a more perfect system of land tenure for retarding the development of country could hardly have been devised', and he adds, 'luckily, so far as the Orkneys and Shetlands are concerned, whether by fair or foul means we need not stop to inquire, it has become a thing of the past'.

This one-sided opinion of the Odel system does not exhaust the question. Like all systems, Odel has the defects of its qualities, and they are obvious enough. It contributes to a division of the land into far too many parts, it periodically sterilizes some of the vitality of the community, so that it becomes torpid, and it gives little to all. Its undeniable merit, on the other hand, is the protection it affords to property as against the interests of its individual owners. It contributes to increased enterprise on the part of those members of the family for whom conditions are difficult, it promotes clearing, cultivation, and emigration, it keeps alive a strong element of energy, initiative, and ingenuity.

The immigrants to the Scottish islands had grown up under the Odel system, and they established it in the Shetlands and Orkneys. Even now *udal*, *udel* in the Shetlands, means Odel in the sense of old inherited property with undiminished privileges, and the term exists in a stronger sense as *ald udel*, Odel in Perpetuity, from old Norse *Alda Odal*. The early settlers became founders of families, Odel men. After them, the land was inheritable according to the system of the Law of Odel, or it could be sold as in Norway, subject to the reservation of Odel rights.

On the 4th of March, 1360, Marcus Gudbrandsson of Sandvik in the Shetlands transferred the farm of Öy

¹ Tudor, *The Orkneys and Shetland*, London, 1883, p. 19.

(now Uya) on Unst to Dame Herdis, the daughter of Torvald 'with all that which is and has been from afore-time and that which is new, in the farmhouse and outside, near or far, on sea or on land'. He renounced it in the name of himself and his heirs to Dame Herdis and her heirs in perpetuity 'whereby she may grant or incur debts, or sell it as she may desire'.¹ This was the ancient legal formula for the sale of a farm, from the time when such transactions were made verbally.

The development of the Odel system and its modification by the action of various causes went on intermittently during several periods of the Middle Ages. The most important of these causes were the accumulation of landed estates by the nobility, the west European feudal system and its effects, and finally the accumulation of estates by the Church, which in many respects played a part resembling that of the hypothecating banks of modern times. The most exposed position in this conflict was that of the Orkneys and Shetlands. Neither in the Faroes nor Iceland do we meet with the word Odelsmen as a sign of dissension to the same extent as in the Scottish islands.

'The evolution of property in the west from the seventh to tenth centuries is an interesting conversion of the common property of the township, which is preserved in many ways in the Teutonic world.'² In England, for example, forests, pasture-lands, heaths, and bogs remained undivided among the members of the village community, who possessed equal rights of property and usage over them. Meadows and ploughlands were divided into lots, the former enclosed for a part of the year, the latter lying in open fields. Each free member of the village community had the right to a certain number of long

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. iii, No. 310.

² P. Boissonnade, *Life and Work in Medieval Europe*, London, 1927, p. 78.

strips of about an acre, separated from the others by bands of turf, so that each family enjoyed an equal share in the cultivated lands and those under the fallow. After the corn had been harvested and the hay cut, these fields were thrown open to the cattle of all the family groups, as the common pastures were all the year round. The land was cultivated by the same methods, and in common, by the members of the rural community, who yoked teams of eight or twelve oxen to plough the soil.'

The manner in which the right of private ownership developed on this basis is, in reality, rooted in the individualistic conceptions of Roman Law and the influence of economic necessities working in favour of individual private property. Family property developed in some places to a permanent occupation of holdings. The principle of private and individual property was built up and spread among the new races. It received barbarian names, *bookland* in England, *alod* in Germany and Gaul, but it was fundamentally the same as the old Roman property, *possessio* or *sors*, over which the individual had full rights. The development went further in the direction of transferring the ownership of the soil from the family to individuals, kings, and princes, who profited by the movement.

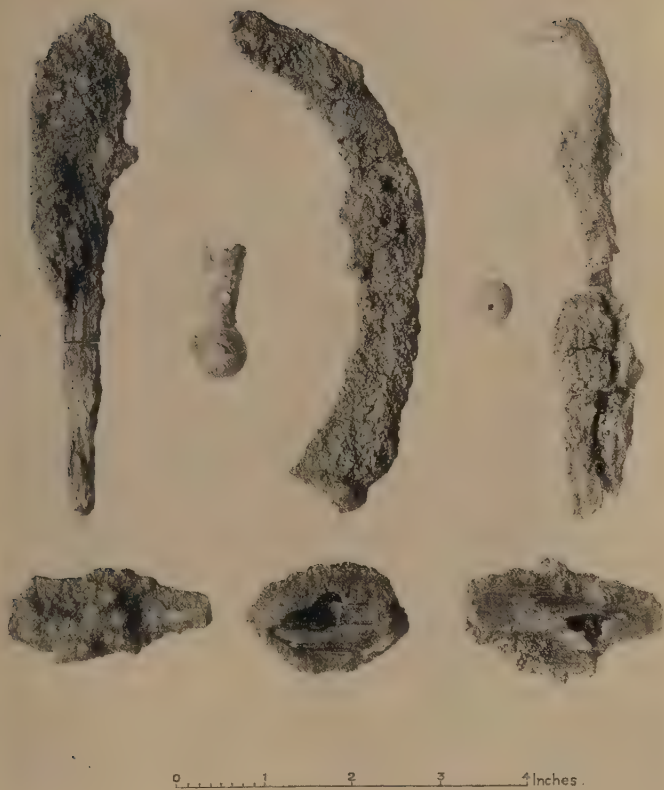
Such was approximately the state of affairs in western Europe in the ninth century when the great invasions from the North arrived. They fell within a period when the development was reaching a phase which we call western European feudalism—a political, social, and economic régime, which provided a framework for the activities of labour during some 400 years (Boissonnade).

Feudalism may be called, to some extent, a spontaneous product of the conditions prevailing in western Europe; whereas it was entirely foreign to the North. Its distribution of the social work, based on a monopoly

of the land for the Church and the fighting aristocracy, can be understood, to some extent, when one observes the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire and the destructive effects of the German invasions. It was the Church which preserved and protected civilization and the aristocracy, the *milites*, the feudal knights, who protected the Christian west against complete disintegration. The feudal state was a useful form of social contract.

The feudal system was quite incompatible with the older forms of ownership, the collective property of the village, and free individual ownership, which hindered its expansion and evaded its monopoly. Everywhere in western Europe feudalism marched triumphant and created the conception of the feudal rights of property; this triumph, in England, dating from the Norman Conquest. In 1086 Domesday Book recorded only 44,531 free landowners out of a total of 1,500,000 inhabitants in the Anglo-Norman kingdom.

The feudal mentality was characterized by the grip of the military aristocracy and the Church upon landed property and upon most of the fruits of labour. Whatever view one takes of its merits, whether it is contended that feudalism represents a highly developed structure beneficial to the community, or whether stress is laid upon its many faults, it is clear that there was an impassable gulf between the reasoning of the Odel system and feudalism. To the Odelsman the feudal agriculturist was a slave; and freedom from the service of any man whatever was the only tolerable state of life. Feudalism boasts of the just distribution of work, the Christian law and order in the feudal community. There is a strong Roman-Catholic Ecclesiastical tinge in the argument for feudalism: it lays far more stress, in spite of



Relics from a grave in the links of Pierowall, Westray, Orkney. Small iron sickle, silver mounting with Celtic ornaments, iron knife, bead of clay, and iron fragments

appearances, upon social organization than does the system of Odel rights, which is deeply individualistic, with the individualism of the family. Feudalism promoted, at least in appearance, the development of a State more than did the Odel system, by tightening the bonds of social discipline and providing means of correcting offences against it.

Although in the late Middle Ages Norway became in many ways highly feudalized in an economic sense, yet it cannot be said that feudalism as a social system obtained any real footing there. In one district alone was there a conflict between feudalism and the Odel system which resulted in a victory of a sort for the former, namely, in the Orkneys and Shetlands, where the clash with the influence of the Anglo-Norman civilization was bound to be specially great. The history of this conflict has an internal side, in the structure of the new Norse community, and a political side in the relation between Scotland and Norway.

The Odel system, as a social framework, never acclimatized itself in the lands colonized by the Norsemen, except in the Orkneys and Shetlands. Neither in Caithness nor the Hebrides, Man, or Ireland was the Odel system able to flourish on foreign soil. Its geographical extent therefore limits in a striking manner the most permanent result of the Norse emigration. Where it lived there was an independent Norse mentality, a form of thought as a basis for all work and initiative in regard to the soil. The Odel system is a form of life which binds the Norse lands of the Western Sea closer than anything else to Norway. It is a form of life from which all the ancient Norwegian sense of justice drew nourishment, and which supported the whole of the ancient

system of *tings* and *ting*-constitutions. In other words, the Odel system is the keystone of the structure of the community in the Norse lands, a political, social, and economic framework for all labour.

In the case of all the ancient emigration from Norway, to the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Faroes as well as to Iceland and Greenland, the emigrants must have felt themselves more or less isolated from their original home. Not that they forgot their origin—there were too many causes at work which kept that feeling alive for many generations; but that they looked upon themselves as Orkneyans and not as Norsemen; as Shetlanders, Faroans, Icelanders, and Greenlanders, and not as Norwegians.

Where there were no foreign elements to be guarded against, political conditions were simpler. The result, as in Iceland, was a strong policy of freedom and independence towards Norway, which the Icelanders regarded as a Motherland of Norse social life, a rich and necessary place of education for the sons of Iceland's great men, but a country whose Royal policy of annexation they resisted with all their might. Not until the thirteenth century did the Royal Power in Norway attain sufficient strength to effect the conquest of Iceland.

It was otherwise where, as in the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides, the emigrants came into contact with old spheres of civilization in the south, with political powers in England and Scotland based on a mentality unlike their own. Under such circumstances the connexion with the Norwegian king was stronger; a virtue was made of necessity so long as the power of the King of Norway could be of use. A movement, of a sort, for

independence sometimes made its appearance in the Orkneys and Shetlands, but this was based more on the earls' thirst for power than on the wishes of the people. On the whole it may be said that, although the upper classes of the population of the Orkneys and Shetlands became more mixed than was the case in the Faroes and Iceland, yet these were the people who most strongly retained their Norwegian character and sympathies; and this was because it was far more important for them to retain their independence. This is recorded in precisely those documents which have been preserved down to our own time, in which the islands express all their most essential aspirations summed up under the single head of the preservation of their ancient rights and system of life. Finally, it is of symbolic importance that, whereas no Norse king ever set foot in Iceland or the Faroes, many Norse kings from Harald the Fair-Haired to Haakon Haakonsson led political and military expeditions to the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides.

It was the forms of the Odel system in labour and law which built up the small Norse communities in the Shetlands and Orkneys, and in order to understand something of the historical development, it is necessary for us to know a little of the structure of this system.

Its foundation was a race of self-owning *bønder*, with the necessary labourers, the latter more or less in a condition of serfdom. The natural association between the *bønder* families was regulated, as in Norway, according to the ancient heathen custom, by annual or more frequent gatherings, meetings which in later times, at least, were called *ting*. At the *ting*-place the free men met, and from this custom the whole of public life grew up spontaneously. We must not forget that these old

societies were founded upon the spoken word to an extent which we can hardly realize. Apart from the Church and the king the written word was totally unknown up to the end of the twelfth century, and not in general use before the last decades of the thirteenth. The oldest written letter which is known to us from the islands was dated in 1299 in the Shetlands.¹ Not until then can the written word be said to have become a social factor. The *tings* were therefore something more than mere courts of law: they were the meeting-places of all currents of thought from the various parts of the islands. They took the place of literature, they promoted the art of narration and minstrelsy, and they were meeting-places for singing, games, and dances for generation after generation.

We shall not enter into the question of the Norse *tings* in the Shetlands and Orkneys and their constitution from their earliest times. Visible ruins of the old Shetland *tings* still exist, but it is impossible to restore them to their original appearance. First comes the great *ting* of Shetland, which was held at Tingwall on Mainland from the earliest times. Here in the Christian period stood a church, which, after the year 1150, was dedicated to St. Magnus the Martyr. There can be no doubt that it was the successor of a heathen place of worship. Due south lies the ancient Skaalavaag, now Scalloway, whose name means the harbour or bay where the *ting* booths stood, exactly as at the Icelandic Alting. To this place came people from all the Shetland islands in their sailing craft, to bring complaints and petitions and demands, and to fulfil pledges. Here public discipline was meted out, here all great matters were

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. i, No. 89.

dealt with. It was the root of the Shetlanders' unity and self-consciousness: it was the vital nerve of the free peasant society.

There is reason to believe that the oldest *ting* here was an *al-ting*, an everyman's *ting* for all free Shetlanders, at which presumably, as at the ancient Norse Alting every peasant employer of labour would be entitled to attend.

Of the development of the Shetland *lagting*, which we know to have existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we have no record. It was a *ting* of quite another type, a 'representative *ting*' which all peasants were not entitled to attend, but to which election was made according to definite rules—in other words, a *ting* similar to modern parliamentary gatherings such as, for example, the present Norwegian Storting.¹ It is fairly certain that this development took place in the Shetlands on parallel lines to the development of the Norse *ting* in the western district of Norway, the Gula *ting*. The old Law Book of the Shetlands, which in all probability dates back to the reign of King Sverre (about 1200), was lost in the conflict of the Scottish Suppression (16th and 17th centuries). That it closely resembled the Gula Law we can see, however, from a document of 1538, seventy years after the islands were separated from Norway, where the Shetland Lagman pronounces a judgement according to the Gula Law.²

The chairman of the Lagting was the Lagman who, by reason of his high and responsible office, was the chosen deputy of the society. In free Iceland he may be considered to have been the president of the *bonde-*

¹ A. Taranger, 'Frostatingstedet', *Nordtrøndelags Historielags Årbok*, 1926.

² *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. ii, No. 1126.

republic. Within the framework drawn up by the other institutions, the Lagman of the Shetlands and the Lagman of the Orkneys were likewise the presidents of the communities. The initiative, the legal system, and the main organ of policy during the whole of the purely Norse period, was in the hands of the Lagting, not of the earl. It was only after the gradual Scotticization that this was changed.

The main facts which we have established in the case of Shetland no doubt apply, broadly speaking, to the Orkneys too. We do not know exactly where the Orkneyan main *ting* was held in olden times, but after 1150 it was probably held at Kirkwall. In these islands also the names of lagmen of the thirteenth century are known, and the part they played seems to have been the same as in the Shetlands.

In the constitutional details of the social order, Shetland shows the original Norse features in the division of the country into *tings*, which undoubtedly have their origin in places of heathen worship. In any case they all represent subsequent Church sites. They are preserved on Mainland in the present Delting (Dala-ting), Aithsting (Eidsting), Lunnasting (Lundseidsting), Nesting, Sandsting, and Tingwall, and also in Tveitasting and Raudating, which have now disappeared.

What marks both the internal and external history of the islands, however, is the fact that the Orkneys and Shetlands became an earldom and also, subsequently, a bishopric. The relation of Shetland to the earldom varied at different times, but through its own archdeaconry it was permanently linked with the Orkneyan Church. The earl and the bishop gradually became the most powerful men in the islands, and the relation

between them became the main feature in what we may call the 'foreign policy' of the islands; that is to say, first and foremost their relations with Scotland, and, secondly, with Norway. The earl represented the Norwegian kingdom, the realm of the King of Norway. The bishop represented, first and foremost, Rome, the Holy Catholic Church, but secondarily the Norwegian Archiepiscopate. The development of the Orkneyan Church, however, also points inward to important factors in the political history of the islands, which we will now endeavour to make clear.

The earldom was established by Harald the Fair-Haired after his great expedition to the isles of the Western Sea in the eight-seventies. His conquest of the Orkneys, Sudreys, and Shetlands was a part of his plan for the conquest of Norway. He subjected the islands in the same way in which he subjected Tröndelag, Hordaland, and all the other provinces of Norway. After a hundred years' colonization from Norway the Shetlands and Orkneys were an important part of that country which King Harald had set himself to conquer.

The islands were, however, not incorporated in the kingdom. They were held for the king in a manner impossible in the case of the provinces of Norway. In order to bind them personally to himself he established the earldom. He chose for this purpose a high family of Möre race which he desired to make use of in his conquest. The first earl, the forefather of all the earls of the Norse line down to the Scottish Angus line in the years about 1230, was Einar, Torv Einar (Peat Einar) as he was called. The earl was to defend the islands against foreigners, uphold the rights of the king, and exercise the functions of the latter in the Orkneys and

Shetlands. We do not know how the duties and privileges of the earl were originally defined. At first he probably had no other duties than those which were determined by the land areas of the islands. Within these bounds, however, he was no doubt able to raise an army for the defence of the island, but hardly to use it outside the islands. It seems as if, in the Orkneys at any rate, an arrangement existed by which a long ship was found by every two parishes, in all, apparently, sixteen long ships.¹

The earldom depended entirely for its very existence upon the effective support of the king. Harald the Fair-Haired had himself been in the Orkneys and Shetlands, but after him there was no real king in Norway who had power outside certain limited areas, and the connexion between the Orkney earl and the kings of Norway during the whole of the tenth century was very loose. During the reign of St. Olav, a hundred years after Harald, conditions become more definite. He had had Ragnvald, the eldest son of the earl, with him in Norway. This boy took part in the battle of Stiklestad, and during the years he spent at the king's court he had thoroughly learnt what the king's requirements and view of the earldom were. From that time it seems to have been understood that the power of the earl was derived from the King of Norway, and that the individual earls must receive possession of the Orkneys from the hands of the king. Their right of inheritance was subject to the approval of the king. This does not

¹ J. Storer Clouston, 'The Battle of Tankerness', *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. vi, 1927-8, p. 22. As to the ancient division and fiscal system in the Orkneys and Shetlands, see A. W. Johnston in Viking Society's Old Lore Series No. 59, *Old Lore Miscellany of Orkney, Shetland, &c.*, vol. ix, part 1, London, 1921.

always seem to have been the case in practice, and in periods when internal affairs occupied the attention and energy of the king, the islands were left more or less to their own devices. The descendants of the family were engaged in quarrelling over the right of inheritance, and, in reality, the history of the earldom is full of purely personal feuds between the heirs to the title, in which the King of Norway, Scotch dynasties, Orkneyan and Sudreyan conditions continually combine to make a complicated and curious state of affairs.

From time to time English interests also played a certain part in the history of the Orkneys, owing to English ambitions in Scotland. The first of these occasions was when Canute endeavoured to subjugate all the North Sea kingdoms. He held Denmark and England, and for a short time Norway also. It was therefore a natural project on his part to complete this conquest by annexing Scotland, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands. Scotland, however, was not so easily conquered: it consisted of too many small kingdoms of varying size and importance. He prevailed upon Malcolm II, King of Scots, to swear him fealty, and intended to do the same with the Earl of Orkney.

This thirty-years-old prince, an extraordinary mixture of barbarism and civilization, great intelligence and primitive strength, at a time when the idea of nationality was as yet unborn, conceived the prudent and far-sighted plan of creating an extensive North Sea kingdom, a plan highly appropriate to a period so rich in maritime activity. He was the first North Sea politician of those ancient times, and many of his thoughts on this subject lived on during the following two centuries of western European political activity.

In Norway, Canute carried on his policy of agitation with the help of lavish expenditure of silver, or, as we should say, money. He was a master of the politics of conquest, endowed with a wise and clear psychological insight which never failed to govern his relations with individuals and communities. In an age of great conquerors he was perhaps the greatest.

Canute's system of bribery in Norway and elsewhere is brought to mind by the many discoveries of silver hoards of the period 1016-35. To this group naturally belong a number of discoveries of silver in the Shetlands and Orkneys, which help to demonstrate the fact that he endeavoured to wrench these islands from the King of Norway.¹

All this ended with Canute's death. Norway's first real kingdom was established under Magnus the Good, after 1034. Denmark and England were separated, and Scotland obtained, in Malcolm III Canmore, the first of the kings whom we can call the makers of Scotland.

At this time the Orkneys obtained a really great chieftain in Earl Torfinn (1035-64). His qualities of constructive statesmanship rank equally high with those of the kings who in this period made the history of northern Europe. There was Scottish blood in his veins. His mother was a daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm II. He had been at the court of the Saint-King Olav of Norway, and when later King Magnus the Good was fully occupied with the great settlement with Denmark, he seized the opportunity to make as much as could possibly be made out of the Orkneys by an energetic man like himself. He is the prototype of the Norse

¹ See the list of Norse antiquities from Shetland, above, p. 116, and from Orkney, p. 130.

King Magnus Berfött (bare leg), engaged in innumerable ways in the most intricate enterprises in Scotland and on the Sudreys. He married a wife from one of the great and powerful Norwegian landed families, the Giske, and rose up as the conqueror of all northern and western Scotland, which yielded him, if we are to believe the 'kvæðe' about him, nine Scottish earldoms, those of Katanes (Caithness), Sutherland, Ross, Moray, Buchan, Atholl, Lorne, Argyll, and Galloway, and became a dangerous rival to the crown of Scotland. Icelandic bards and great Norsemen entered his service just as they had entered that of St. Olav and Canute. At his court in his earldom of Galloway, where he most frequently dwelt during the days of his power, he held what the Icelanders call in an untranslatable expression *rausnarbú* (grand house, open house), and was joined by men of the best families of Norway, Iceland, and Scotland.

In the activities of Earl Torfinn we see the first signs of the political contrasts which later were to become so fundamental. He sought natural alliances with all the north Scottish spheres of interest against south Scotland where the Scottish Royal Power had its centre.

Earl Torfinn was no mere romantic Viking figure, but a politician on a grand scale. He built Christ Church at Birsá on Mainland in the Orkneys, and he established the bishopric of the Orkneys. His bishop appears to have been the Torolv whom Adalbert of Bremen consecrated about 1050 for work in the Orkneys. It is very possible that Torfinn only received the Bremen mission, but in any case he retained both the initiative and the supreme power in the Church which he thus permitted to enter the Orkneys. With his great contemporary Malcolm Canmore he dealt as an equal, and it followed, as a

matter of course, that he sought the alliance most natural for him, that of Harald Hardraade, King of Norway.

Under all the romantic Viking boastfulness of the Orkneyinga Saga, we can detect Earl Torfinn's systematic work, conducted with insight and firmness and with an intimate knowledge of the matters upon which he was engaged. His aim was nothing less than an Orkneyan-Norse conquest of as much of Scotland and Ireland as possible. He prevailed upon King Harald of Norway to send a Norse fleet to the Orkneys for the accomplishment of this plan, and Earl Torfinn became the leader of a great expedition to the Irish Sea. This reached as far south as Wales. Magnus, the young son of the Norse king, accompanied the expedition, and it is not difficult to understand that all the later enterprises of this gifted young man were the result of Torfinn's influence. While Torfinn, however, was only the earl who extended the earldom as a basis for these plans of conquest, the aim of Magnus, when he came to the throne, was to make the Norse king the sole master of all these regions.

King Magnus steeped himself so deeply in the atmosphere of Norse Scotland that he even adopted the Scottish dress with bare knees, and was accordingly nicknamed Berfött or Berlegg when he showed himself in the streets of Bergen and Trondhjem. This king is generally represented as a romantic Viking figure, the last Viking, who from a love of adventure and war-like deeds made no less than three expeditions to the islands of the Western Sea, in 1093, 1098, and 1103. He was anything but this. If we follow his actions closely, it is very plain not only that his goal was a great one, but that he worked towards it with the firm will

of a real statesman, with an earnestness which revealed a great purpose. His aim was quite simply to conquer both Scotland and Ireland for the King of Norway, and, with this behind him, to subjugate England and become lord over all that we now call Great Britain. It appears also to have been his intention to abolish the earldom and incorporate it in the realm of Norway. He was a Norse Canute, of the same proportions as the latter. He was twenty years old when he began, and only thirty when he met his end.

This decade saw the activity of a will of imposing dimensions. His first act upon his arrival in the Orkneys in 1093 was to make both earls prisoners and send them to Norway, where they subsequently died. The systematic manner in which he went to work can best be seen from his granting of land in the Sudreys, west Scotland, and Ireland, to trustworthy Norse soldiers whom he taught how to colonize in these parts. It is by methods like these that all great military commanders have worked.

There is no doubt that he intended to create a Norse Vassal Kingdom in Scotland, Ireland, and England, and that he intended this for his son Sigurd Jorsalfarer, whom he took with him to the Orkneys on his first expedition to the Western Sea, and who spent a number of his youthful years there.

Of all this King Magnus achieved nothing; even though, with his political talents, he was superior to the Scots King Donald Bane, whom at one time he intended to make a vassal of the Norse Crown. Neither did he succeed in subjugating England, and he was killed in the attempt to conquer Ireland. One thing is certain, however: when he fell in 1103 in the last effort to conquer

Ireland, there were two kings, Donald Bane of Scotland and Henry I of England, who breathed more easily on the disappearance of a dangerous opponent.

It was this generation of King Magnus Berfött which played the greatest part in the establishment of Norwegian culture in the Shetlands, Orkneys, Caithness, Sudreys, Galloway, Man, and Ireland. On his last two expeditions he was accompanied by hundreds of Norsemen of note. These men from home visited the Norse islands off the Scottish coasts and obtained a lively impression of what these western communities had become; and these impressions were passed on and remained alive in the families of the Norsemen up to the end of the twelfth century.

One of the last acts of King Magnus was to nominate his son Sigurd King of all the Norse lands of the Western Sea, both of the Shetlands and Orkneys, Sudreys and Man, and many others. This position could not be maintained; and with the death of Magnus they fell apart again, only in the Sudreys the inhabitants retained a tendency thenceforward to call their chiefs Kings.

The activities of King Magnus in the Western Sea marked the zenith of Norwegian culture there. In order to strengthen the alliance he had married his son Sigurd to the daughter of an Irish King. Sigurd Jorsalfarer, however, did not inherit his father's indomitable energy and political greatness, and very little of his clear and sparkling intelligence.

With the death of King Magnus the sons of the Earls of Orkney raised their heads. The most capable of them, Haakon Paalsson, grandson of the great Torfinn, took ship to Norway and obtained half of the earldom

as a fief from King Sigurd. The other half remained the property of the Norse Crown, and was governed by Norse lieutenants sent over by the King. The main result of the work of King Magnus was that the earldom became completely dependent on the King of Norway. Thus was fulfilled the desire of King Harald the Fair-Haired, two hundred years before. From this time the earldom was always enfeoffed. Under the system of Odel rights this led inevitably to constant bickerings between the heirs, and the whole of the twelfth century was, as a matter of fact, one long record of quarrels between earls and pretenders to the title.

In the meantime another event took place which played a leading part in the islands during the twelfth century, the growth of the bishopric through its martyr and saint, Magnus, and the building of St. Magnus' Cathedral.

One December day in 1135 a remarkable procession wound its way between the winter-browned hills of Orkney's mainland. Led by Bishop Viljam and the clergy of the Orkneys, the peasants carried the casket containing the body of the holy Magnus from the church at Birsa to the parish church of Kirkwall. Down through the valleys to Finstown, and along the fjord to the seaport, the chanting procession of *bænder* and priests wended its way; and from that day the headquarters of the Orkneyan See was changed from the ancient seat of the earldom at Birsa to Kirkwall.

It was one of Orkney's own earls that had been canonized. Magnus Erlendsson, who only twenty years previously (1115) had been killed at Egilsay by his cousin Haakon, was in life a figure of no special interest. When one reads the description of him in the Saga, one

can only wonder how this man could become the great saint of the islands, more important there than Norway's St. Olav.

Naturally enough, the canonization was the outcome of a complicated set of circumstances, some of which at least we can detail.

According to the Saga, it was Earl Torfinn who established the bishopric in the Orkneys, where he built Christ Church at Birsá. From extant letters we learn that this was done in co-operation with York. The first bishop was one Radulv, who was consecrated at York by Archbishop Thomas; and his successor (Roger from Whitby monastery, about 1105) was also from York. At this time arose the first ecclesiastical conflict in Scotland, in which King Malcolm's English wife Margaret played an important part. The Orkney Islands also were drawn into it.

About the year 1100 there were very few bishoprics in Scotland. There were Glasgow, Iona, the Orkneys, and perhaps a couple of others of minor importance, but above all there was St. Andrews.

In a letter which Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury sent to Earl Haakon in the Orkneys in 1109, he praised the latter warmly for having obtained the new bishop for the islands. This was the York cleric, Radulv II. This letter was supplemented by one which the Pope wrote to the same bishop in 1119, to the effect that he should obey Turstinus who had become Archbishop of York. In 1125 the Pope wrote to the King of Norway that the claims of Radulv of York had been contested by another bishop, who had forced himself into the Orkneys, and the Pope now required King Sigurd, on pain of the wrath of God, to protect Radulv. From a letter

of 1128 we finally see that Radulv was still styled Bishop of the Orkneys, but that he lived at York.¹

The man who had 'forced himself' into the bishopric of the Orkneys was the Scottish Viljam, scholar of Paris, monk of Melrose,² the Grand Old Man of the Orkneys, *Villiellmus senex, primus episcopus*, as his epitaph runs on the leaden plaque found in the church in 1840.

It is clear that during these decades the Orkneys were a bone of contention between the Anglican Church (Canterbury, York) and the Scottish. The renaissance of the Scottish Church began with Margaret and her son Alexander I (1107-24),³ but above all with the latter's brother, David I, the maker of Scotland, the Norman on the throne of Scotland, and after 1124 sole King over the whole of Scotland. He represented Anglo-Norman feudalism, Anglo-Norman municipal laws in the burghs, and not least the Anglo-Norman Church. He was Scotland's great church reformer, and he advanced the Augustinian Mission by gathering means to organize the building of churches and the creation of bishoprics. In the years between 1125 and 1150 there were founded and built no less than seven cathedrals in addition to a number of smaller churches and abbeys.⁴

¹ See Appendix to this chapter.

² P. A. Munch, *Det Norske folks historie*, iv, p. 43. See also Munch, *A Catalogue of the Bishops of Orkney, 1112-1477* (The Bannatyne Miscellany, iii, 1855, pp. 181-8).

³ Founder of the See of *Dunkeld and Moray* (Bishop's seat first at Birnie, where the Norman church still stands, moved to Kinnedar in 1184, to Spynie in 1208, and to Elgin in 1224).

⁴ *Dunblane* founded before 1150, and the cathedral built about the same time.

Brechin founded at the same time, and the cathedral built.

Aberdeen. The bishopric removed to this place about 1130, and the cathedral built at that time.

It is impossible not to regard this Norman-Scottish movement as a background for what went on in the Orkneys in 1120, the years after the death of Magnus. The man who during these years re-created the Orkneyan See, Viljam, was a representative of the whole of this Norman-Scottish school, educated in Paris. Despite the tenor of the Saga, there is every reason to believe that it was he who met the desire of the peasants for the canonization of Magnus, used it in the interests of the Church, and was the leader in the creation of one of the greatest and most beautiful cathedrals, having as its central point such an enormous creative power as a national saint, one of the Orkney peasants' own men, a miracle-worker in their midst.

Magnus died in 1115, and was canonized in 1135. The initiative was not from Norway, it is practically certain that it was a fruit of the ecclesiastical activity of the reign of King David.

This could never have happened, however, if the germs of the new movement had not lain in the Orkney *bœnder* themselves.

These conclusions are confirmed by the history of the building of St. Magnus' Cathedral. It was built in 1137, and, as Johan Meyer has shown, its oldest parts are in the main an example of the Anglo-Norman style.¹ The architectural impulse is derived mainly from the

Ross founded about 1125, and the cathedral built in those years.

Caithness founded about 1130. The bishop first lived at Halkirk and Thurso (Scrabster), removed in 1223 to Dornoch.

In addition *Glasgow* was restored by David I; the cathedral, built by John Achaius, was consecrated in 1136.

Further, the cathedral at *Whithorn* (Galloway) was built about 1130.

¹ L. Dietrichson and Johan Meyer, *Monumenta Orcadica*, Oslo, 1906.

Durham School. This accords quite well with the fact that the primus of the Scottish Church after 1115 was one Turgot, who had been prior of the Benedictine Monastery at Durham.

It was Rome, Latinity for good or evil, which had won its first victory in the Orkneys. St. Magnus' Cathedral was naturally first and foremost created by the ability and power of the Orkneyan population. St. Magnus was above all their own saints, and he meant the same to the Orkney Islands as her patron saint, St. Olav, did to Norway. He strengthened and marked their independence in relation to both Scotland and Norway. St. Magnus' Cathedral is also, however, a witness to the victory of the Church. Previously there had been a cleric residing under the protection of the earl at Birsá, a bishop indeed, but in effect more like a domestic chaplain. Now, the Church had become an independent institution, and it was this Church which from the beginning laid the foundations of the Union with Scotland, not consciously at first, but gradually developing in this direction.

The Saga has allotted to Earl Ragnvald a large share of the credit for the growth of the cult of St. Magnus and the foundation of St. Magnus' Cathedral. He was a Norwegian, the son of an important man of Agder, born there and brought up in wealthy circles, and of a generation of young, fresh intelligence in Norway, a travelled and in all respects a well-equipped man.

He had no other title to the earldom than that his mother was a sister of Earl Magnus, but the latter's elevation to the position of the patron saint of the Shetlands and Orkneys, offered to Earl Ragnvald a unique opportunity. With this weapon in his hand he prepared

the way to become sole Earl of the Orkneys and Shetlands. He allied himself with the bishop in the building of the church, and after ten to fifteen years' labour the first cathedral of St. Magnus was more or less finished. The beautiful building of red and yellow stone, in its oldest form, consisted of a nave of six bays, a choir of three, with eastern apse and transepts. The work is simple, and so proportioned that it gives an idea of great size. 'I do not think that either York or Lincoln gave me an idea of greater internal length,' says Neale.¹

It is very natural that Earl Ragnvald has become something of a national hero in the Orkneys, in quite another degree than his uncle, St. Magnus. The verbal tradition of the Islands has preserved so rich a store of lays, stories, and anecdotes about him that we can form some idea of his personality. A richly endowed, merry, and sparkling personality; an organizer, a vigorous worker, an expression of both Norse and Orkneyan mentality.

It was a great event, both for him and for the Orkneys, when, in company with Bishop Viljam, he took a journey to the Holy Land with fifteen ships from the Orkneys and several hundred men from the Orkneys and Shetlands, laymen and learned. A number of Norsemen were also of the party. He sailed for the Mediterranean

¹ Ragnvald's name is also connected with an important land reform in the Orkneys. It had been the custom that on the death of every owner the Odel became the prerogative of the earl, whereby the heir on each occasion must redeem it from him. By decisions of the *tings* this was modified in such a manner that the peasants agreed to pay to the earl one mark for each ploughed field in consideration of the abolition of the right of redemption. The Saga says that it was in this manner that Ragnvald obtained sufficient money to continue and complete the erection of the cathedral.

in 1153 and was away for two years. A crusade it was not; for that purpose quite other means were necessary; but we must ask ourselves what such an expedition must have meant to the little peasant community of the Orkneys. Even if the expedition and its members were worldly both in body and mind, it was nevertheless a fruit of the victory of the Church in the Orkneys.

While Earl Ragnvald was absent, an important event occurred in the Orkneys. In the summer of 1153 Eystein, King of Norway, came to the islands and used the opportunity to abolish many agreements and privileges. The plan of his journey seems to show that Eystein wished to put a stop to the increasing influence from Scotland. Ragnvald's co-earl, Harald Maddads-son, was Scotch through and through. Eystein compelled him to receive the islands in fief, and thereafter sailed to the east coast of Scotland, where he penetrated as far as Aberdeen, but without meeting the King of Scotland.

The increase of Scottish interests in the Orkneys was also regarded as a danger by King Sverre. With him there also came an important decision in regard to the relation of the islands to Norway, which for many years was fundamental.

In certain circles in Norway which could not tolerate the fact that King Sverre had become sole King of Norway, a conspiracy was set on foot, initiated by the first man of the day in the Shetlands, Olav Jarlsmaag, a brother-in-law of Harald, Earl of Orkney. The plot was formed in Norway, but it was intended that the whole of the assistance needed to carry it through should come from the islands. In the summer of 1193 Olav came to the islands, where, with the sanction of

the earl, he enlisted men and ships, in all twenty-three ships and possibly 3,000 men. It shows how high the prosperity of the islands stood at the time, that such a large fleet could be recruited. It is impossible to regard the whole of this recruiting as merely an engagement of men and ships. It is not altogether unlikely that the affair should be regarded as an effort in various high quarters in the Orkneys and Shetlands to detach them from King Sverre.

This was the *öyskeggenes* party, as it was called in the Norse tradition, the only case in which peasants of the Orkneys and Shetlands directly interfered in Norse politics. The result was a complete disaster. At Florevaag near Bergen, in the autumn of 1193, King Sverre won a great victory over the *öyskeggene*. Many hundreds of Orkneyan and Shetland men lost their lives.

In the summer of 1195 the earl and the bishop, Bjarne skald, the first Orkney-born holder of the See, and a son of Kolbein ruga of Rousay, with many other chosen representatives of the islands, sailed to Bergen in order to come to terms with the Norse King. The decision arrived at with their consent was the determining factor in the future relations of the islands to Norway.

The Shetlands were separated from the earldom and placed directly under the Norwegian Crown.

One half of the *sakeyre* on the Orkneys was placed under the Crown of Norway.

The estates of all those who fell at Florevaag were confiscated to the Crown. They could, of course, be redeemed within three years; but how many of those who were left behind with the farms were able to avail themselves of this? The blow probably fell most

severely on the Shetlands, where it was later established that the King of Norway owned vast estates.

In order to ensure the fulfilment of these terms, King Sverre nominated officers in the Shetlands to execute the sentences without mercy.

Further, he completely destroyed the independence of the Shetlands by enacting that for the future they should have a joint lagman with the Faroes.

This treaty was carefully written down in full at Bergen, and ratified by the representatives of the islands. It was subsequently one of the most important State papers in the royal archives.

The Treaty of Bergen, in 1195, gave the King of Norway considerably more positive and direct interest in the Orkneys and Shetlands than before. It marked them out as lands tributary to the Crown of Norway. It was this which ushered in the thirteenth century, which became such an important age politically in regard to the relations between Norway and Scotland.

We have here endeavoured to illuminate some of the factors which governed the history of the Orkneys and Shetlands down to about the year 1200. Both were communities Norwegian in features, in language, and in form of life, but they were also an island region with its own mentality, but which was now rapidly being conquered by the Latinity which at that time reigned supreme in west Europe.

St. Magnus' Cathedral was not the only outcome of this; in a number of places the old tree was putting forth new shoots. The Orkneyinga Saga plainly marks the close of this flourishing period of the twelfth century in the Orkneys. It was written in the years about 1190 by a native of Iceland living in the Orkneys. It is

not history in our sense of the word, but an account of individual men who lived and acted in the Orkneys and Shetlands in olden days and whom the author has clothed in the dress of the Church, clad them in the simple clear Latin style, but who, in spite of all disguise, were cast in the same mould which the Norse emigrants 400 hundred years before had carried with them to the northern islands of Scotland.

APPENDIX

The Bishopric of Orkney was, according to O. Kolsrud, *Den norske kirkes erkebiskoper og biskoper inntil reformationen* (ed. by *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, xvii, B) originally governed from Hamburg-Bremen about 1050, but after 1073 it came under York, which, however, in its turn gave way to Lund, until the erection of the Norwegian archiepiscopate in 1154.

The first bishop was *Jón*, an Irishman, consecrated in Scotland or Ireland, sent to the Orkneys in 1043-50 by Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen, and afterwards to Iceland.

Torolv, the next, may possibly be the Bishop of Birsa, about 1050, consecrated by Adalbert of Bremen.

Adalbert, probably a Norwegian, is said to have been acknowledged by Adalbert of Bremen as Bishop of Orkney about 1067-72.

Radulv, cleric, was consecrated 3 March 1073 by Archbishop Thomas of York on the recommendation of Earl Pål Torfinnsson.

Roger from Whitby in the see of York was consecrated about 1102 by Archbishop Girard of York. He was still living in 1108.

Radulv II, surnamed *Novell*, a minister of St. Petri in York, was *elected* Bishop of Orkney and consecrated by Archbishop Thomas II of York, and confirmed by Pope Calixtus II in 1119.

He was ordered to obey Archbishop Thurstan of York in 1119. He was driven away from his see but reinstated in 1125

by Pope Honorius II, according to a command to the Norwegian King Sigurd. He did not, however, succeed in getting possession of his Orkney See, staying at Durham and York as a vicar. He was still living in 1143.

The year when *Viljam* was placed in his Orkneyan See is supposed by Kolsrud to be 1112 (instead of 1102). He died in 1168.

Besides several statements in ecclesiastical documents of different kinds in England, France, and Italy, collected by Kolsrud, the direct statements concerning the first bishopric are the following, edited in *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*:

Vol. xix, No. 14 (1064-73). Archbishop Thomas of York to Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, about the cleric Radulv, sent to him by Earl Pål of Orkney with a letter informing him that he (i.e. the earl) had appointed this cleric to be bishop in his country. (See also No. 15-16.)

Vol. xx, No. 19 (1101-8). Note in the Papal Records that Roger of York was consecrated Bishop of the Orkneys, &c.

Vol. xx, No. 20 (1106-9). Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury to Earl Haakon of Orkney, expressing his contentment with the new Bishop of the Orkneys.

Vol. xix, No. 22 (1109-14). Letter of obedience from Radulv, cleric of York, elected a Bishop of Orkney, consecrated by Thomas II of York.

Vol. xvii, No. 851 (20 Nov. 1119). Pope Calixtus II writes from Beauvais to Radulv, Bishop of the Orkneys and several other bishops, commanding them to obey Turstinus of York, consecrated by the Pope.

Vol. xvii, No. 2 (1119). Rome. Pope Calixtus II to the Norwegian kings, summoning them to defend Radulv of the Orkneys.

Vol. xvii, No. 3 (1125). Pope Honorius writes about the consecration of Radulv, calling upon the King of Norway to protect him against (*Viljam*).

VI

NORWAY AND SCOTLAND

THE DECLINE OF ONE NATION AND THE RISE OF ANOTHER.

‘The struggle with the Norsemen was the anvil on which
Scottish nationality was hammered out.’—KERMACK.

IF one writes down the dates at which the frontiers of Scotland were fixed, one is tempted to express amazement at such unexampled consistency. The southern border may be regarded as having been finally fixed in 1157. One hundred years later, in 1266, the Scottish Crown acquired all the Western Isles; two hundred years after that, the Northern Islands, practically speaking, passed into the possession of the King of Scotland.

This historical development was naturally not guided by any conscious design. Thousands of chance events, human errors, and unsuccessful plans combined with the work of many different minds and personalities. Some pulled one way, some another; and gradually the force took shape which triumphed in the end. For, in spite of disappointed hopes, miscalculations, and the vagaries of chance, the Scottish struggle for national existence, through the whole of the Middle Ages, slowly but surely moved towards one goal, Scotland for the Scottish Crown.

The battle for the southern border falls outside the problems here discussed.

The fight for the Western Isles is also a section which is outside our subject, but its concluding chapter is of

such crucial importance for the fate of the Orkneys and Shetlands that some attempt must be made to give an account of it.

The conflict carried on by the Scottish kings to strengthen their own power, a conflict which meant the national unification of Scotland, came to a head in about 1200. The lords of Galloway, the barons of Argyll and Moray, and the earls of Ross, by their alliances with the Sudreys (Hebrides) and all the lords of the Western Isles, had become a continual danger to the power of the Scottish Crown. Nor was this danger diminished by the fact that from ancient times the King of England supported the lords of the isles.

The King of Norway still retained full sovereignty over the Western Isles, but for him too the difficulties of the position were constantly increasing. In addition, in 1230, Allan, lord over Galloway, and Thomas, Earl of Athol, on a great expedition to the Sudreys, drove out Olav, the Norse vassal king of Man.

This created new difficulties for the King of Norway. Some of the chiefs were compelled to break their oath of allegiance, others did so purely out of self-interest, and allied themselves with the King of Scots because he was nearer than the King of Norway. Some of the chiefs who held lands under both kings were in doubt to whom they should give their obedience.

The Scots King, Alexander II, first tried negotiations, but these were completely unsuccessful. In the long run it was impossible for the Scots King to tolerate the sovereignty of the King of Norway over the islands and parts of Scotland. Alexander created the great programme of the kings of Scotland when he declared that he would not rest until he had planted his standard

upon the cliffs of Thurso and subdued everything that the Norse king owned west of the ocean.¹

After King Haakon, in 1230, had sent a small fleet to the Sudreys, the position became even more acute, and fresh negotiations were opened, partly through the initiative of the King of England. They led to no result, and henceforth the King of Norway kept himself continually informed of everything which occurred in the islands. King Alexander, on his part, consistently pushed on his plans. From Matthew of Paris we know that he had a serious and definite end, to make all the Norse vassals break their oaths of allegiance to the King of Norway.

When Alexander died, in 1249, matters came to a standstill. An embassy was sent to Norway to obtain a reconciliation, or in any case a postponement of the existing controversial questions. For some years there was peace, but only until Alexander III attained his majority. He was eight years old when his father died, in 1249; he was twenty when he seriously commenced to work for the conquest of the Western Isles by the Scottish Crown. It is a striking fact that in the final conflict a young man of twenty was opposed to a man of sixty. It was young Scotland which for the first time stood opposed to ancient Norway. Events developed in a manner which proves that neither King Haakon Haakonsson of Norway nor King Alexander III of Scotland always retained the initiative. At first Alexander adopted a conciliatory tone towards King Haakon, and, among other things, made an offer to purchase the Western Isles. There is no doubt that the King of

¹ Patrick Fraser Tytler, *The History of Scotland*, new edition, vol. i, Edinburgh, 1866, p. 21.

Norway's power and international reputation at this time was of such a character that King Alexander wished to avoid a conflict. His father-in-law, Henry III of England, encouraged him in this, and again attempted mediation.

Thus the matter stood when the events of the summer of 1262 were brought to a head by the Earl of Ross's attack on the Sudreys, an attack which was probably made with the approval of King Alexander. It was an unfortunate contrast to the friendly negotiations which had been carried on by representatives of the two kings through the mediation of Henry III,¹ and when the report reached Norway, in the autumn of 1262, there was no choice left to Haakon Haakonsson. At a Council of the great men of the realm, the expedition to the Western Sea was decided upon.

At the new year of 1263, a summons to arms was sent out over all Norway. The king himself conducted all the preparations. Early in the spring he sent two trustworthy men, each in his own ship, to the Shetlands and Orkneys, to recruit pilots and men acquainted with the Sudreys and the west coast of Scotland. At the same time he commanded the Earl of Orkney to take part in the great expedition. These preparations explain why King Haakon's plans were known in Scotland as early as May 1263.

Haakon Haakonsson's fleet, which, during the course

¹ Letter from King Henry to the Norwegian king (dated Rheims, 15 Nov. 1262), acknowledging that King Haakon has abandoned his intention to go to Scotland. King Henry declares that he will ask King Alexander to repair the unjust treatment of the Norwegians in Scotland and do all within his power to preserve the peace between the Scottish and Norwegian realms. *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, 272.

of the spring and summer collected between Herdla and Bergen, was one of the greatest naval forces ever assembled. It consisted of 160 ships, including several of great size, and perhaps 20,000 men. The greatest of the ships was built at Bergen during the winter and was one of the largest ever built in Norway during the Middle Ages, having thirty-seven *rúm*. It was the Royal Flagship on the western expedition, and was named *Christsuden*. In consequence of the many internal wars in Norway in the period about 1200, ship-building, especially the building of warships, had been developed to a very high level of perfection. Thus in the winter of 1206-7 about thirty great ships were built for the Bagler faction. This was a rivalry in armaments on a great scale, so great that, in proportion to the wealth and population of the country, it can only be compared to the naval rivalry of modern powers.

The reason for mentioning this is not in order to extol Norway, but to establish the fact that in Haakon Haakonsson's time the Norse kingdom was a great power in contemporary Europe. Even the wealth of the country, as far as ships and shipping were concerned, indicates the high standard of development reached in the years about 1250.

In the army which King Haakon led to the west the aristocratic element also was well represented by men of the older generation who had been with the king in the olden days when he had fought for his kingdom, and had considerable military experience and skill. There were also noblemen of the younger generation who had grown up during the glorious period of Haakon's reign and knew little of the labour it had cost him to reach his present eminence. The contrast between young

and old was sharper than is often the case, and it is a point which throws some light on the sequel. The king himself was in his sixtieth year when he set out. It was 110 years since a Norse king had been in the west.

It is important to ask what was the aim of fitting out so large a fleet, although it was by no means the largest that could have been collected in Norway at that time. Haakon Haakonsson was much too old and experienced a military commander to go in person to the Sudreys with so large a fleet merely to punish and intimidate a few subject kings. Nor would this be worth doing, for King Haakon was well aware that the continual unrest in the Sudreys and Man was really instigated by King Alexander. It is quite plain that the intention was to aim a decisive blow at the Scottish king, and thereby restore the Norse sovereignty in the islands. In the route followed by his fleet proof will be found of the military genius of King Haakon. With comparatively few halts by the way, the fleet sailed for its ultimate goal, which was Arran, near the entrance of the great firth which leads from the west into the heart of Scotland. Kermack has drawn attention to the fact that all the attacks which have been made against the kingdom of Scotland from the sea have been made in this direction, in order to strike at the heart of the country, the plain between the Clyde and the Forth. This applies to Ivar Beinlaus at Dumbarton in 869, Somerled at Renfrew in 1164, Haakon Haakonsson in 1263, and the ninth Earl of Argyll in 1685.¹

From this we learn various lessons concerning the war in the summer of 1263 which it is important to

¹ *Historical Geography of Scotland*, p. 21.

emphasize in our judgement of the result. Haakon Haakonsson had ships and ordinary footmen armed with bows and arrows and weapons for hand-to-hand combat (sword, spear, and shield). Alexander III had no ships. The Scottish Kingdom, as a military organization, was only equipped for warfare on land. It might have been possible to have obtained ships during the spring of 1263, but this was not the question. At that time there existed no trained ships' crews in Scotland, nor were there any leaders accustomed to naval warfare. It would have meant certain defeat for the Scots if they had hastily collected a fleet to meet the Norse squadrons which had on board such trained and veteran admirals as Brynjolv Jonsson, Baard of Hesbö, Agmund Krökedans, and King Haakon himself, men who had been handling ships of war for a generation.

The Scotch military power was founded first and foremost on castles, coastal and other strongholds, cavalry, and ordinary footmen. The few extant documents with regard to this summer show that it was on these that the Scottish preparations were concentrated with intense energy. All the coast defences at the disposal of King Alexander, either directly or through his vassals, were put in a state of defence and supplied with everything necessary for a siege—men, arms, and provisions.

We have an account rendered by the bailie of Inverurie¹ in respect of the garrison quartered there by command of King Alexander for a period of six months when the Norse King was expected, and for payment for twenty head of cattle which were taken to the castle to serve as food for the garrison. A similar account from

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, 279.

the seneschal of Stirling also exists.¹ From the Sheriff of Ayr² there is also an account for the building of two ships and for 200 oars, and further for the payment of the people who three times during the course of the summer spied out the movements of the Norse King. To four men who kept watch for twenty-three weeks over these ships a wage was paid. In respect of provisions bought for the castle in case of siege there are receipts for salt, oats, and grain, and finally compensation to peasants in Kyle and Carrick who were exempted from land-tax for cattle which they had delivered, from peasants at Breweweill in all forty-six cattle taken for the account of the king, &c., &c. The burgesses of Ayr, however, refused to garrison the Royal castle under the threat of King Haakon's invasion, which delinquency on their part was reported by the sheriff, who had to hire soldiers.

Even though many more of the Scotch castles were put into a state of defence, there are preserved, by accident or otherwise, accounts of the three most important. Stirling, Ayr, and Wigtown³ are the entrance ways to the most important battlefield of Scotland. We see from this with what clear military insight the Scottish defence was arranged. In addition, as early as May, King Alexander sent men to Caithness and Skye and took hostages, from the first mentioned district alone no less than twenty-two, who together with princely hostages from Skye and the Hebrides were entertained for twenty-six weeks at Inverness for the account of the

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, No. 275.

² *Ibid.*, No. 277. Accounts from Earl Walter of Menteith. W. M. Mackenzie, *The Mediaeval Castle in Scotland*. Rhind Lectures 1926, London, 1927, p. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 280.

king. Similar bills for hostages are found in the Earl of Menteith's accounts and those of the Sheriff of Forfar, in both cases for the youthful sons of princes.¹

In order to defeat King Alexander, King Haakon was not only compelled to land in Scotland, on the plain, but he had to face the necessity of besieging Scotland's most important castles, Stirling, Dumbarton, and others. As long as these castles could maintain their garrisons, even a victory in the open could not be decisive.

The military science to which King Haakon was accustomed from his many years of warfare in Norway did not include any highly-developed siegecraft. Even the castle was still in its infancy in Norway, where naval warfare and fighting in the open were the most important methods of war. Even if a number of the Scottish castles in the thirteenth century as we now know them were not exactly what we regard as castles, they were, nevertheless, both by their nature and number, the main factor in the Scottish defence.² The military technique which they represented was as strange to Haakon Haakonsson as naval science was to Alexander III.

These conditions make a background for the results of the King of Norway's expedition to the Western Sea in 1263.

It is clear that not only in Scotland, but also in England the advent of the Norse King was feared.³ The respect for his great power was real and is also a factor in explaining how the Scots must have regarded

¹ Tytler, vol. ii, pp. 274-319.

² W. M. Mackenzie, *The Mediaeval Castle in Scotland*, London, 1927.

³ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, 274, letter from Ralph de Neville of York to King Henry.

the result of the expedition. Alexander himself during the summer had thought of leading a flying expedition to the Sudreys, but renounced the idea owing, among other things, to the advice of his father-in-law, King Henry.¹

Among the followers of the Norse King was his vassal Jon, Earl of Orkney. He was certainly Scotch by descent and by nature, but he can hardly have harboured any affection for Alexander who, for his part, by taking so many hostages from Caithness, wished to make his position clear to the earl.

As early as May the Scotch preparations were commenced, but the Norwegian forces took time to collect, and from the very start the great plan was weakened because the great fleet started far too late. Instead of being in Scottish waters at the beginning of the summer the fleet did not arrive at Skye until the middle of August. Moreover, by then it had been somewhat reduced by leaving a number of ships behind in the Orkneys. Not before the 8th of September did it arrive at Arran. From here negotiations were opened with Alexander, but they led to no result.²

The operations which followed prove the correctness of the assumption that it was necessary to strike a blow at the plain. A decisive obstacle was Dumbarton Castle, which closed the entrance. In the meantime this was avoided by a manœuvre well-known in Norse warfare. A squadron of sixty ships sailed up Loch Long and were drawn overland to Loch Lomond, from whence great parts of Stirlingshire were ravaged, and farm-

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, 273, letter to the council of the Scottish king.

² *Haakon Haakonssöns Saga*, chapter 322 ff.

houses and crops burnt in the middle of the harvest season without, apparently, any opposition from the Scotch troops.

Whilst this was being carried on the event occurred which is known as the battle of Largs.

At the end of September strong winds arose, and as the harbour at Arran was unsafe, King Haakon moved the ships in to the eastern side of the Cumbrae islands, opposite Largs, where there was comparatively good anchorage. On the night before Monday, 1st October, the wind freshened to a gale, and, even with two anchors out on each ship, several began to drift. Under great difficulties the Norsemen endeavoured to save the ships, but some of them drove on to the low sandy shore at Largs and were irretrievably lost.

Towards the morning Scotch troops advanced on Largs as the result of information conveyed in the night by express messenger from their permanent look-out post there. A brief skirmish took place during the course of the Monday, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Scotch, while the Norsemen during a few hours' lull in the storm worked hard to make the ships ready for sea again. On the whole the position had improved somewhat during the night of the 1st of October, when the main body of the Scottish army advanced on Largs by a forced march and arrived in the neighbourhood at daybreak on Tuesday, 2nd October. With this army was a force of 600 knights. With the increasing fury of the storm, the position of the Norsemen was practically untenable. Battle could not be given, and the only thing to be done was to fight a rearguard action to cover the retreat of the ships. This was done to perfection. The Scottish cavalry proved of little use when exposed to

the Norse pikes, and the result was that the Scotsmen withdrew over the heights of Largs and the Norsemen with the loss of only four wrecked ships and a number of men were able to bring their fleet safely into harbour in the Cumbrae islands.

Several days later King Haakon sailed north with his fleet, but not until the 29th of October did he cross the Pentland Firth to the Orkneys. The autumn was too far advanced for him to sail home to Norway, and the situation was such that it might be necessary for him to prolong his stay in the west. King Haakon and his men took up their quarters at Kirkwall and the district round about, the King himself residing in the Bishop's Palace. The ships were laid up for the winter at various places round Scapa Flow.

This brings us to the story of the King's illness and last days, a moving story which opens to our view a perspective reaching far back over the history of Norway. On the 15th December, 1263, Haakon Haakonsson died at the Bishop's Palace in Kirkwall.

He was not only a great king in the splendour of a great period of national history. He was one of those to whom this period owed its greatness. The culmination of the Middle Ages in Norway is embodied in the figure of Haakon Haakonsson. The ripe summer of Norwegian medieval civilization, and the first rich colours of its autumn, are reflected in the personality of the king who sailed with that mighty armada to his death in the west.

It was not until January 1264 that the news of the death of King Haakon reached King Alexander in Scotland. On the same day he received news that his Queen had borne him a son. The whole realm, says the

Scottish chronicler Fordun, resounded with the joy of this double good fortune.

If we are to judge Haakon Haakonsson's expedition to the Western Sea solely on its merits, we must first and foremost insist that it produced no definite military result.¹ The outcome of the skirmish at Largs was due more to natural forces than to military energy. For Alexander III Largs was no victory any more than it was for King Haakon. Somewhat paradoxically, one may venture to say that two different games were played on the same board, and thus it is not easy to say who won or lost. It would have been easier to form an opinion on these matters if Haakon Haakonsson's son had not died shortly afterwards, but, as we all know, there is no more futile occupation than to ask what the result might have been if that which happened had not happened.

It is difficult from the account in the Saga to get to the bottom of King Haakon's intentions with regard to the entire expedition. The Saga endeavours to give the impression that he did not regard it as at all a blow to the sovereignty and authority of the Norse Crown in the lands of the Western Sea. What really happened, however, was of vital importance. After the coming of

¹ P. F. Tytler, *The History of Scotland*, new edition, vol. i, Edinburgh, 1866, p. 39: 'It was evidently a fatal mistake in Haco to delay so long in petty expeditions against the Western Islands. While it was still summer, and the weather fair, he ought to have attempted a descent upon the mainland. And had he done so, Alexander might have been thrown into difficulties. Delay and protracted negotiation was the policy of the Scots. They thus avoided any general battle. And they knew that if they could detain the Norwegian fleet upon the coast till the setting in of the winter storms, its destruction was almost inevitable. The battle of Largs appears to have been nothing more than a succession of fortunate skirmishes, in which a formidable armament was effectually destroyed by the fury of the elements.'

the Norse King had been feared and prepared against for nearly six months, the whole matter ended by his departure from Scotch waters without any great or decisive military operation; and this fact makes it impossible to establish or overthrow any theory as to his design. At any rate, the result was to encourage the Scots and to diminish the initiative and power of those who took over the inheritance he left, especially in the case of his son Magnus Lagaböter.

In reality, however, it is impossible to read the Saga without obtaining the impression of a king suddenly stricken with old age, a king who after a long life of uniform success suddenly felt the fates against him, and turned back a broken man whose disappointment contributed to his death.

Magnus Haakonsson made no attempt to force a new issue of a military nature in Scotland. In the summer of 1264 embassies were exchanged between Scotland and Norway to negotiate a settlement. The monetary offer was again made and considered. It is not surprising that, in an age which knew no telegraph and no regular postal services and steamships, the negotiations took so long. In the course of 1265 the parties arrived at an agreement, and only the formalities remained. The Norse and Scotch representatives met at Perth, where the final treaty was concluded on the 2nd of July 1266. By this the King of Norway ceded Man and the Sudreys with all rights to the King of Scotland, and in addition the right of patronage to the bishopric of Man, though without violation of the jurisdiction of the Norse Archiepiscopate. In return, the Scotch king pledged himself to pay 4,000 marks sterling and a yearly payment in perpetuity of 100 marks sterling.

It is interesting to note that in this treaty it is expressly stated that the Orkneys and Shetlands, with various precisely defined rights, are retained wholly and without reservation within the realm of the King of Norway.

The territory which Harald the Fair-Haired, Harald Haardraade, Magnus Berfött, Sigurd Jorsalfarer, Eysteinn, and Haakon Haakonsson had claimed and held for the Crown of Norway for 400 years was now lost. It is possible that at home in Norway they considered this loss balanced by the fact that the Norse king had lately prevailed upon Iceland and Greenland to submit to him.

Some years after this came a fresh episode in the history of the relations between Norway and Scotland, a phase in the politics of the North Sea, in which England, as in the reign of Canute, endeavoured to play a dominant rôle, but without possessing Canute's power. This is the strange and fascinating romance of the marriage of the Norse King Erik with the daughter of Alexander III, and their daughter Margaret's right to the Crown of Scotland—the little maid of Norway, for whose fate all Scotland's and England's barons and vassals, bishops and sheriffs trembled for a whole summer, and whose death released her from the labyrinth of politics before the ship which bore her from Norway to Scotland reached the Orkneys in the summer of 1290. It was not only the relations between Norway and Scotland that were at stake, but Scotland's struggle for independence against England.

During all these years the population of the Orkneys and Shetlands had cultivated their land, sown and reaped, and cleared new land and laid it under the hoe.

Slowly, however, often unnoticed, changes were preparing the way for the Scottish conquest of the islands. Neither war nor violence had any part in it. It came about in quite another, but no less effective, manner. It took place from above and, so to speak, in two directions; partly by the complete Scotticization of the line of earls and its continually increasing Scottish mentality, partly by the increasing recruitment from the Scottish Church of priests and bishops who were schooled in the social order of feudalism, which harmonized so well with the standpoint of the Catholic Church in regard to society and discipline.

Some data concerning this silent process can be given.

It is a remarkable fact that the Orkneyinga Saga ends at a very important period in the history of the islands. The line of earls, which for a long time had been mixed, practically half Scotch, became wholly Scotch when Torv-Einar's male line ceased with Earl Jon in 1231, after holding the earldom for ten generations. One of Jon's sisters, married to Gilbert of Angus, brought the earldom into this purely Scotch family, and the Angus line retained it until 1329. It then passed to another Scottish branch, the Stratherne line, whose first earl was Malise. In this family it remained until 1379, when, through the lack of male heirs, it passed in the person of Henry of Sinclair to the St. Clair line, who held it until the mortgage.

It would have been very unreasonable to expect of these Scottish earls, even though they were the vassals of the King of Norway, that they should blot out all trace of their descent and upbringing. First and foremost it must be remembered that they owned large

possessions, and had relatives, in Scotland, where the feudal rights gradually made them of the ruling class. With David II the feudalization of Scotland was accomplished outright, including feudal rights, certain orders, and ranks in society which were clearly and strongly marked. In the Orkneys they came into contact with something quite different, and completely foreign to them; not only a language which they cannot have understood, French-speaking as many of the earls still were, but a system of law and land-tenure completely in conflict with their habits of thought. Among the Norse population of the islands the earl had always been one with themselves, his rights could never limit any of their liberties; but this double system appeared, to the earls at least, as something quite untenable.

One cannot but ask whether the population also had not become mixed during the passage of years. There must have been a good deal of intermarriage with the Scots. In reality, however, this made little difference. However mixed their blood may have become, generation after generation received the impress of Norse mentality, the system of Odel rights.

A specially important fact was the increasingly strong connexion of the Orkney church with the Church of Scotland by the systematic recruitment from Scotch families. As far as the documents go, we can see that this began seriously about the middle of the fourteenth century. Prior to that time, the clergy came and went between Norway and the Orkneys, between the Orkneys and Nidaros, Oslo and Bergen. Archbishop Paal of Nidaros had been a canon in the Orkneys in 1343. His canonry was filled by Tore Guttormsson of Oslo. Canon Arne of the Orkneys became Archbishop in

Norway in 1346 and his canonry was filled by the Norseman Baard Einarsson.

From about 1350 a great change took place in this respect. In a document issued at Kirkwall in 1369 we come across a number of Scotch names. Among them were Viljam of Buchan, Archdeacon of the Orkneys, Walter of Buchan, canon of St. Magnus' Cathedral, William Wood, priest of the Orkney Islands, and many others.¹

In the Shetlands the Archdeacon in 1372 was a Buchan and in 1383 a William de Lancea from Moray.²

From this period it occurred with frequency that canons and priests in the Orkneys retained ecclesiastical offices in Scotland. This was specially so in the case of diaconates, precentorships, and parish livings in Moray and Glasgow. In 1390 the secretary of the Bishop of Orkney, Malcolm de Clyne, was also a priest in Moray.³

In the years about 1400 the Scotch element increased and with it the custom of plurality of livings. One cannot but notice how the Tulloch family of Inverness bestirred themselves in the years 1420 to 1450 to place the individual members of the family in ecclesiastical positions in the Orkneys and Shetlands and in Scotland; many of them capable men, not least Thomas Tulloch who in 1418 became bishop of the Orkneys.

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. i, 404, dated Kirkwall 25 May 1369. An agreement between the Bishop Wiljam and Haakon Jonssön about the obligations of the bishop to the Norwegian king, and with an adjustment about the necessity of the appointment of officials of *native origin*, &c., signed by twenty-three persons of Orkney.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vii, 283 and vol. xvii, 931.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. xvii, 932.

Malise Tulloch became archdeacon in the Shetlands in 1430 and was allowed by the Pope to retain a sub-precentorship in Moray.

Andrew Tulloch was archdeacon in the Orkneys and also held the benefice of the parish church in Glasgow, a prebend in Orphir, and a vicarage in Ronaldsay, 1435-40.

Another Thomas Tulloch became archdeacon in the Shetlands in 1457 and held also a number of other benefices.¹

Although the Scottish Church, at least in appearance, held aloof from the religious radicalism of this age, its worldliness and disintegration, we cannot avoid a strong impression that these ecclesiastics, who during the fifteenth century overran the Orkneys and Shetlands and collected diaconates, precentorships, and parochial benefices wholesale, gave expression to something of that thirst for riches which was the ruling passion of intellectual circles everywhere: the deluge of money which finally destroyed the Middle Ages and prepared the way for the Renaissance.

We can say with fair certainty that in the Orkneys at least not only was there not a single Norse ecclesiastic after 1450, but not even a native of the Orkneys or Shetlands. It is a matter of great importance that the clergy in Kirkwall and those who held the parochial livings, those who in daily life came into touch with the public in such a variety of ways, were, in the majority of cases, men of Scotch descent, or, as they were called in the Orkneys in the years about 1420, *utlendske menn*.

Of the many minor factors which contributed to the

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xvii, 480 and following letters.

same movement may be mentioned that the Bishops of Orkney, ever since 1320, had received from the Scottish authorities an annual feudal due of £5, paid in Aberdeen. The same authorities also, up to the time of the separation, rendered an annual tribute of a certain amount of grain and altar wine to the Cathedral of St. Magnus at Kirkwall.¹

Nothing can better illustrate the actual bond of union between the Orkneys and Scotland than the conditions during the great Schism (1378-1416). When Clement VII took up his residence in Avignon, there were only two States which gave him their allegiance, France and her ally Scotland. The northern countries, including Norway, submitted to the Roman pontiff. What the Orkneys themselves desired we do not know, but it is sufficient that the See of Orkney during those years, in conflict with the metropolitan in Nidaros, was governed by the Scottish Church and Avignon; and, probably at the instigation of the earl, a Sinclair, the Avignon pope appointed Robert Sinclair to the See of Orkney and W. de Lancea to the archidiaconate of the Shetlands. The question gave rise to much dissension and many negotiations, but the authority of the Nidaros metropolitan does not appear to have been of much consequence in the islands at that time. For several years there were two Bishops of Orkney, and even after the matter had been formally settled, in 1392, when the Orkneys again submitted to Nidaros and the Roman pope, the Scottish Church and the Avignon pontiff continued to interfere in a number of ways in Orkneyan ecclesiastical affairs.

The significance of the gradual linguistic changes in

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xix, 531-4, 561-652.

the Orkneys, on the other hand, is easily overestimated, although it is of importance to establish how this took place. Here the difference between the development in the Shetlands and in the Orkneys is very noticeable, for, after all, the Orkney Islands are situated closer to Scotland than the Shetlands.

The last document to be written in the Orkneys in Norwegian was the great Public Petition to the king in 1426 concerning the complaint against David Menyes.¹ It should be added, however, that this letter was not couched in typical Orkney-Norse. It is not improbable that it was penned by a royal scrivener who used the Norse official style of the period. In the meantime it is a very important fact that, not more than ten years after, the Orkneyan lagman wrote in lowland Scotch—the first communication in this language in the islands that we know of.² He was without doubt an Orkneyan born, Henrik Rendall, but called himself in Scotch, and signed his name, Harry Randell. Although ancient documents from these years are rare, there is every reason to believe that lowland Scotch came into use more and more during this time through the servants of the clergy and the earls. It was a rapid process of Scotticization which developed after about 1440.

In the Shetlands, on the other hand, Norse retained its hold much longer. All contracts of sale of estates and documents of a private legal character which are known were drawn up in Norse, even long after the Cession. As examples may be mentioned documents from Unst (1465), Mainland (1509), and others.³ Norse

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. ii, 691.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xx, 815.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, 859, and vol. vi, 651.

was in use in the Shetlands as the common tongue for a great part of the sixteenth century, and not before the seventeenth century did it begin to give place to lowland Scotch. In formularies and Church prayers Norse was used nearly down to our own times. Even as late as 1770 the Lord's Prayer in the Shetlands was said in a corrupt form of Norse.¹

It is not without interest to point out that the ordinary civil connexions between the Orkneys and Scotland have formed a number of natural bonds. In 1312 the two countries were still hostile to each other. The Scots and Orkneymen had inflicted great damage on each other, so great that the matter formed the subject of negotiations between Robert Bruce and Haakon V, who especially at that time nursed a mutual friendship in a natural alliance against England. This was gradually altered by the Scottish national struggle, which more than anything else in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was directed towards a settlement of the difficulties in the northern parts of Scotland. The documents are few, but a number of them throw a vivid light both on the main facts and on points of detail. In the fifteenth century it appears that the Orkney Islands had a good and regular market for pork, sheep, and hides in Scotland. There is, for example, an account made up at the Customs in Edinburgh for 1429-31 which shows a payment of £3 16s. to merchants from 'Orkney in Norway' for pigs, sheep, and other food which had been delivered to the royal house. Further, there is a statement of 1444 in respect of meat, dried pork, and much else delivered from the Orkneys at Stirling Castle. With

¹ George Low, *A Tour through the Islands of Orkney and Shetland*, ed. by Joseph Anderson, Kirkwall, 1879, p. 105.

England also this trade went on. This can be seen from the safe-conduct which King Henry IV issued in 1446 for five years to four merchants of Kirkwall who were permitted to import goods into and export merchandise from England as often as they wished, and their ship had an Orkneyan name in a French form 'Le Magnus'.¹ We see the tradition preserved in the name of the boat which to-day plies between Aberdeen and the Orkneys and Shetlands, 'St. Magnus'.

The proofs are certainly not numerous, but they can be increased indirectly, and they all point the same way, that in the two generations between 1425 and 1470 the Orkneys, both in commerce and in administration (secular and ecclesiastical), had slipped away from Norway and closer to Scotland.

It was otherwise with the Shetlands. Here the proofs are more numerous, and they all point to the fact that Shetland had continued to maintain the most intimate connexion with Norway in practically all ways. We will mention some of these.

In 1327 the Bishop of Bergen wrote to his brother bishop in the Orkneys and asked him to help his representative in the collection of the Sunniva meal which the peasants from ancient times had given to the Shrine of St. Sunniva at Bergen (*quae sunnifumiol in vulgari appellatur*).² There was also a lively connexion between the Shetlands and Bergen through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

There was also one special circumstance which through the Middle Ages bound the Shetlands to Norway: the extensive interest of Norse landowners in the Shetlands,

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xx, 788, 840, 849.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vii, 120.

to which absolutely nothing corresponding is known in the case of the Orkneys. How this arose has not yet been made clear, and too little study has been devoted to the subject, but a few facts may be mentioned.

There were in especial two great estates in the Shetlands, whose development reveals these facts. Dame Herdis Torvaldsdatter, of the Shetlands, whose father had been a very influential man in the islands, increased her estates in 1355 and 1360 by the purchase of farms in Unst and Mainland. When she died, in 1364, the estates were inherited by Norsemen, chiefly Jon and Sigurd Havtorssønner, two of Norway's most powerful and most prominent men. We cannot with certainty follow the further development of this Shetland estate, but from casual information we can see that it was the same estate which a hundred years later, in 1490, was inherited from a nobleman, Hans Sigurdssøn, by members of the Norse noble families of Römer, Kane, and others. In 1520 or thereabouts the inheritance passed to the Giske family, and to the Swedish Regent Ture Jonssøn of the family of 'Tre Roser'. The protracted dispute over the inheritance is of no interest in the present connexion, but it is interesting to note that here was a collective Shetland estate in the possession of Norse nobility for more than 200 years, and that this estate survived the Cession to Scotland in 1469.¹

The other great estate in the Shetlands which was in Norse ownership in the Middle Ages was that held by the Munkeliv Monastery of Bergen, which can be

¹ The letters concerning this 'Hetlandsgods', as it is called in Norwegian, are printed in *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. iii, 284, 310; vol. vii, 267; vol. viii, 426; vol. xviii, 341; vol. xvi, 540.

proved to have been the case already in the fourteenth century, and which was increased by frequent gifts from Shetland men and women. In regard to this there are exact statements from 1427 and later, and these are one of the most valuable written sources of information concerning land-tenure in Shetland in the Middle Ages. We must also emphasize the historical value of the fact that Shetland peasants gave their farms to a Norse monastery at Bergen, and not to the canonries and prebends of the Orkneyan Church.¹

Of influential private Norsemen who owned land in the Shetlands, mention must be made of Gaut Ivarsson (1399), and his kinsman Greip Ivarsson, who was governor of the Faroes.

These conditions of ownership contributed more than anything else to give the relationship of Shetland to Norway through all the Middle Ages a considerably more permanent character than that of the Orkneys, and they explain why Norwegian culture held its ground so much longer than in the latter islands. They also show how much more powerfully the change must have been felt in the Shetlands when the Scotch oppression of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries uprooted the old conditions of ownership.

As an almost pathetic detail in proof how strong Shetland's bonds with Bergen were, even in the sixteenth century, we may mention a document from Bergenhus about 1550, a statement of the duties paid by all nations in Bergen. After having reckoned them all up, the keeper of the accounts writes 'and so there is no other "nation" which generally pays duty, except when ships come from Shetland. Then they are bound

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. xii, No. 190.

to permit all the working boys and girls who are on board and who are out of service to go to the castle and the governor of the castle can have from among them whosoever and as many as he wishes'.¹

The gradual transfer to Scotland which has been shown in a very fragmentary manner was not only a consequence of a natural expansion in Scotland, but equally of a continued weakening of the once powerful realm of Norway. During the whole of the fifteenth century Norway was slipping back into the position of a second-rate power. Its royal power moved to Denmark, its shipping and fleet entirely declined and was supplanted by the German Hansa towns, which changed Bergen into a German town. These are the main causes leading to the mortgage in 1468. It is the history of the rise of one nation and the decline of another.

We will briefly sum up the salient points.

The first expression of the Scotch craving for expansion in the nothern isles we can fix about 1350. In 1357 the common people of the Orkneys sent a petition to the Norse king for help against the encroachments of which the Scottish chief Duncan Anderson had been guilty. On behalf of the lawful heirs to the earldom he had prohibited Orkneymen from sending any of the income of the country outside its borders.²

This and several similar matters gave rise to a number of negotiations, and in 1369 a settlement was arrived at between the representative of the Norse king and the Bishop of Orkney, who here proved himself to have been the most enthusiastic spokesman of Scotch expansion. One of the main points over which the

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. vi, 773.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, 337. The letter is written in Latin.

common people strongly complained was that offices in the Orkneys were filled by foreigners. This complaint was often repeated later, but upon any considerable support from the Danish-Norwegian king they were unable to count. It is also plain that the king consulted his Norwegian Council less and less upon these matters.

The Shetlands had been placed directly under the Crown of Norway in 1195, in the reign of King Sverre. This state was altered when they were vested in Henry Sinclair and thereby came again under the earldom. In the patent of investiture which the king issued in this connexion there is a paragraph which reveals something of the political situation. It states, among other things, that the earl binds himself not to transfer or mortgage any part of the islands.¹ This was ninety years before such a mortgage was finally effected by one of the successors of the same Danish-Norwegian king.

The decisive advance was not made until the first decades of 1400. When Thomas Tulloch obtained the bishopric of the Orkneys in 1420, he issued a remarkable letter to King Eric of Pomerania, in which he bound himself, among other things, to give justice to the people of the Orkneys according to the old Norse Law Book and old customs.²

Two years later David Menyes, a Scot, received a patent for the Orkneys from King Eric (1423). His proceedings in the island were the first systematic attempt to uproot the old Norse conditions of law, which he did not understand, and which (like all representatives of Scotch feudalism) he found great difficulty in respecting. During these years there was an active

¹ *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. ii, 459.

² *Ibid.*, 657.

will in the adult generation of Orkneymen. We have a communication to the Norwegian queen¹ which contains an earnest petition 'to have a native earl as governour of the country, one who will maintain the Law of St. Olav'.

This conflict, carried on by the last generation in the islands who consciously strove for the old Law in the Orkneys, has a political background. Both King James I and King Erik of Norway and Denmark decided to come to an agreement, and after embassies had been dispatched by both parties a renewal took place in Bergen in 1426 of the 160-years-old treaty of Perth (1266), which, as a matter of fact, did not concern the Orkneys, but was used as an instrument in the consolidation of a lasting peace between Scotland and Norway and Denmark.²

In this case the march of events was far stronger than the will of any individual. In the three years of David Menyes' lordship of the Orkneys he succeeded to an amazing degree in destroying large parts of the old Norse system of law in the islands. In the great Petition which the Orkneyans addressed to the king in 1426 in regard to David³—one of the most interesting documents of Orkneyan history, rich in the store of information which it contains of life in Kirkwall and the Orkneys of that time, of the conflicts and wishes of the various personalities that lived and worked there—all the main points of the quarrel are summed up. It is impossible here to quote the whole of this interesting document. There are only two important passages

¹ The patent letter is printed in *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. ii, 676. The complaint in *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. vi, 432.

² *Ibid.*, vol. viii, 275.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, 691.

which must be mentioned. Whether the people were right in saying that David, by his restrictions and his undoubted encroachments, had ruined the Orkneys, as the Petition asserted, need not be discussed.

The crucial points of the complaint were that he had filled all the important posts with *utlendske menn*—that is to say Scots—that he had violated the ancient Norse law of the islands, that he had broken the most elementary rules of legal procedure, familiar to all Orkneyans, and that he had treated the old royal rights and the population's sense of obligations under them as non-existent, that he had outrageously offended their own lagman, the official who was peculiarly their own, and that he had imprisoned this man in order to possess himself of the 'Country's Seal', the most precious treasure of the lagman and the whole people of Orkney, which he stole from the altar of St. Magnus' Cathedral, where it had been placed by the wife of the lagman, together with the ancient Norse Law Book.

There is not a document in regard to the history of the Orkneys and Shetlands which so distinctly reveals the great and irreconcilable differences between Scotch and Norse mentality. We may be quite sure that it is full of exaggerations in regard to the Scotch earl.¹ Devils are rarer in real life than in bills of indictment. Here, however, we are confronted with the most explicit expression of defence of sacred values by the Orkneyan men, which, in the clearest possible manner, shows how the land lay. It was the right as a landowner, his respect for ancient law, his liberty and position, which were at stake.

¹ See especially Hugh Marwick, 'Sir David Menzies of Weem', *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*, vol. vi (1927-8), p. 13.

During the course of the next quarter of a century this active opposition was quite broken down. The Petition of 1426 shows us the last generation which reacted strongly and definitely in concert. The next generation was not characterized by a similar activity.

These decades were the great financial period. They saw the first rise of trade and shipping, which created wealthy men in all the North Sea countries and contributed to the weakening of the national idea which might still have saved the Orkneys and Shetlands for the Norse Crown. It was once more the North Sea which entered into North European politics, this time impelled by a strong motive, the herring fisheries which developed in the North Sea and the cod fisheries which extended right up to Iceland. In this very complicated sphere of interests, where Holland, England, Scotland, and the Hansa towns were the chief actors, the old Norse lands, Iceland, the Faroes, the Shetlands and Orkneys, which owing to Norway's impotence were now in the hands of the Danes, occupied a prominent place.

There is thus no doubt that it was these factors which played a dominating part in the events which led to the systematic attempts of the Scottish Crown to gain sovereignty over the Shetland and Orkney Islands. This chapter concerning the history of the industry is, however, much too long, and has been too little studied, to permit of more than reference to its great importance.

The concluding chapter, which carries us as far as 1469, is therefore short; even though the negotiations, which from the beginning were carried on with the help of the French king, were protracted. They commenced in 1456 and ended with discussions in Copenhagen in

1468-9. The practical basis of these was, as is well known, the proposal for a solution of all questions at issue by a marriage between the son of James II and the daughter of the Norwegian-Danish king Christian I. The marriage was resolved upon, and, according to the custom of the times, the bride was to have a dowry.¹ To provide this the Orkneys and, subsequently, when the sum of money borrowed from foreign bankers was found too small, the Shetlands were mortgaged to the King of Scotland. On the 28th of May 1469, when the bride was already on board a Scottish vessel bound for her new country, the final agreements were ratified in Copenhagen. This mortgage was entirely in accord with the imperfect financial system of the fifteenth century. It was not regarded as nationally humiliating or unusual. Further, it was protected by all the forms of assurance which were possible in practical politics. The ancient Norse right of Odel was reserved to the population of the Orkneys and Shetlands, and it was renewed and confirmed on several occasions by the Scottish Parliament, the last occasion being in 1587.

It is not probable that the Danish king, Christian I, ever seriously contemplated the redemption of the mortgage thus arranged. The ebullition of Norse feeling about 1500 gave some prominence to the question, however, and led to the inclusion in charters by Kings of Denmark seeking Norwegian assistance, of definite paragraphs concerning the redemption of the Orkneys and Shetlands, none of which were of any real worth.²

¹ The best view of the negotiations and their results is given by A. Taranger, *Norges Historie*, vol. iii, part 2, Oslo, 1917, pp. 132-46.

² Gilbert Goudie, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Antiquities of Shetland*, Edinburgh, 1914, pp. 213-29.

To form an impartial judgement upon the event is difficult. Even against one's will, one finds the political element overpowering many others of far greater importance; but that which strikes one most is the difference from the settlement of 1263-6 regarding the Sudreys and Man. At that time it was a Norse king, backed by a Norse fleet, who endeavoured to determine a great political question which, with a strong sense of his obligations, he had inherited from his ancestors. In 1469 it was a Danish king who, without giving ear to Norwegian men, dealt with Norwegian interests as he pleased, and to the best of his belief for the advantage of the realm. He cannot be blamed for this. Norway's impotence was the main cause of what happened, and the initiative was with the young and vigorous kingdom of Scotland. Six hundred years of history in the Shetland and Orkney Islands were consummated when Denmark's daughter crossed the North Sea on a Scotch vessel to her union with the son of Scotland's king; while the descendants of the old emigrants to the Orkneys and Shetlands again reaped the fruits of that soil which their forefathers for hundreds of years had ploughed, and which new generations after them, in spite of kings, earls, and bishops and their politics, have continued to cultivate, sow, and reap through the ages.

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